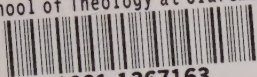


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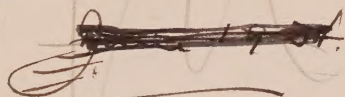
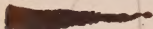
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Albany  
Easter Day 1897.

## RESURRECTION AND CHANGE.

ACTS, x. 40, 41.—“ Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead.”

THE gospel of Christ, rightly understood, is the proclamation of a fact and its consequences. The fact is set forth in the joyful salutation of Easter morning. The Lord is risen indeed; Christ is raised from the dead, and dieth no more. The consequences of the fact are briefly comprehended in the latter clauses of the Apostles' creed—the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life everlasting. [Of these the last three might be said to be included in the first two. For the Forgiveness of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life everlasting] do make up the sum of that blessedness in which the saints have communion now or hereafter. [They are not abstract ideas which have an existence apart from the men in whom they are realized. And it may be important to remember that the outcome of the Resurrection is not to be traced in ideas but in men; men who by it are brought into a new relation to God. Not indeed that the consequences of the Resurrection are ultimately limited to the sons of men.] In the dispensation of the fulness of times God will head up all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, in Him who was raised from the dead as on this day, the Head of a new creation. [But the prospect thus opened is too wide for our present contemplation. We will meditate

the gospel of the Resurrection in its more immediate bearing upon ourselves.]

Our text is taken from that discourse of St. Peter to the Roman soldier Cornelius, which forms the first example of the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. We are struck by the extreme simplicity of the method. There is a brief summary of the well-known facts about the life and works of Jesus before He suffered. There is a still shorter statement of the new fact of His resurrection, and then the briefest possible inference of two consequences only, namely, that He who has been thus raised must be the Judge of quick and dead, and that whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. [St. Peter does not add to the Gentile Cornelius the promise of the Holy Ghost, as he did at Pentecost in speaking to the Jews, for on this point he had not yet received clear light himself. Otherwise his preaching proceeds on much the same lines as his former discourse at Pentecost. And St. Paul's earliest recorded preaching at Antioch and Athens is very similar in scope. The fact of Christ's resurrection, the consequent forgiveness of sins, the exaltation and sovereignty of the Risen Man, these are the points brought out. We do not find any allusion to the great mysteries involved in the Resurrection which are handled later in the apostolic epistles. The new and heavenly standing in Christ to which we are admitted by baptism, the constitution of the Church as the Body of Christ, the Resurrection of the dead and the change of the living, these are not yet mentioned. And the reason seems to be that the apostles themselves did not at first apprehend the full import of the fact to which they testified. They were not, as later superstition has supposed, suddenly endowed with something not far short of divine omniscience, but themselves needed to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour.]

One point is mentioned by the apostle incidentally, which claims attention, because it sets forth a principle of God's

dealings with men.] St. Peter emphasizes the fact that when Jesus was raised God showed Him openly not to all the people but to witnesses chosen before of God, through whose testimony others might believe that which they had not seen. Thus it will ever be to the end. God's greatest acts are wrought in comparative secrecy. They are revealed to a chosen few, themselves, it may be, slow to believe. By their testimony the circle of faith is gradually extended, but faith in testimony is always the condition of sharing the blessing. There comes a day, indeed, when testimony is no longer needed, when "every eye shall see Him" who has been testified to as risen from the dead. But it is significant that the next words are, "All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." We may well note the lesson both as to the present stage of the Lord's work and the stages which are yet to come.]

Let us notice next the language in which St. Peter describes the intercourse of himself and his fellow witnesses with the risen Saviour. "We did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." Is there in all human literature a sentence like this? What can be more commonplace than the first few simple words, "We did eat and drink with Him." And then the sublime, heart-shaking sequel, "We did eat and drink with Him *after He rose from the dead.*" Eating and drinking with Him who was in agony in Gethsemane, who hung upon the cross smitten and rejected, who expired with that wondrous cry, who has been into Paradise, and who is now so wonderfully changed in some respects, so manifestly belonging to a new order of existence, so far above the limitations of mortal life! Is this possible? It was possible, it was the fact. And surely this fact, so simply stated with such child-like unconsciousness, brings out more forcibly than pages of reasoning could have done the absolute personal identity of Him that rose with Him that died. "It is I myself," said the Lord Jesus. "Handle Me and see." It

is the same Person, and not only is it the same Person, to wit, the eternal Son of God, but also the same Person continuing to subsist in the same human nature. "For a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." And although the condition of that nature is so marvellously changed, yet it is the same, complete and permanent. Spirit, soul and body are all preserved flawless and incorrupt. The mark of the spear is in the pierced side, the print of the nails may be traced in hands and feet. The identity is complete in every particular. It is the same Jesus. "And this same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

How completely do these words preclude the notion which has long lurked unexpressed in the hearts of those who have lost their hold upon the truth of Incarnation, and which has even found authoritative expression in the writing of accredited teachers in these days, the notion namely that Jesus does not now retain the very substance of human nature in which He suffered, but that by some unexplained process it was sublimated away or turned into something different at His ascension. Many deceivers are entered into the world, writes St. John, who confess not Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist.

One other point may be noticed before we pass on. The intercourse with the Lord Jesus after His resurrection, which St. Peter describes, shows clearly that those who are still in mortal bodies may be in the presence and company of those who are raised in immortality, without any feelings of terror or repulsion. It is true that when Jesus first stood in the midst of the disciples they were terrified and affrighted. But this was because they supposed they had seen a spirit. So it had been on a former occasion when He came to them walking on the sea. They cried out for fear, saying, It is a spirit. But in both cases His word, It is I, reassures them. As long as they think they see a disembodied spirit they



are afraid. As soon as they are sure that they see Very Man in the body they are at ease, and this equally when He is in the immortal as when He is in the mortal condition. It has been well remarked by a brother minister whose writings we all value, that "between the disembodied and those in the body God has set a gulf that we may not pass over, and a natural repulsion: but between those in the immortal body and those in the mortal there is no gulf and no repulsion. Both co-exist in the Kingdom period."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps even before the Kingdom is fully come this truth may have a practical interest for those who in sincerity "look for the Resurrection of the dead." On the other hand let me press upon you that there is no worse sign of the present working of the mystery of lawlessness than the profane audacity of those who seek to hold intercourse with disembodied spirits of men. Whether they succeed in doing so, or whether they are tricked by seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, we need not discuss. In any case there is a daring transgression of the bounds set by God. Who can wonder if the transgressors be given up to strong delusion, deceiving and being deceived?

Let us now, bearing in mind these hints derived from the contemplation of the resurrection of our Lord, turn to consider the next step in the order of resurrection as described by St. Paul. "Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming."

We remark in the first place that both here and in the parallel passage in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians the apostle seems to be led to the subject by the need of correcting mistaken notions. Both the Thessalonians and the Corinthians were living, as faithful Christians ought ever to have lived and to be living, in the hope and expectation of the Lord's return within their natural lifetime, and St. Paul himself evidently shared this hope. Death was not yet accepted as the inevitable and proper close of a

<sup>1</sup> Rev. S. J. Andrews, "God's Revelations of Himself to Men," p. 324.

Christian's course, nor the fruit of sin substituted for the prize of the high calling. On the contrary, death was so alien from their thoughts that an opposite error was springing up, that of supposing that those believers who had departed this life were thereby excluded from participation in the glory of Christ's triumphal return, and had lost their share in the Kingdom which He should establish. This would be to hope in Christ in this life only. Therefore St. Paul comforts the Thessalonians by assuring them that when the Lord comes the dead in Christ shall rise first, and He reminds the Corinthians that the fact of Christ's resurrection makes it certain that not only the dead in Christ but ultimately all men shall be made alive. This instruction seems to have been enough for some. But the subtle questioning Greek mind was not to be so easily satisfied in all cases. There were some who wanted to make objections and to argue about it. "How are the dead raised up, and with *what kind of* body do they come?"

In considering the apostle's answer to these questions it is very necessary to guard ourselves against the error of importing into his words intentions foreign to the object which he had in view, or extracting from them an answer to controversies not yet mooted. Silly fellow, we understand him to say to his questioner, Do you ask how the dead are raised? Why, by just that same power of God which you see at work when you sow your seed. You put into the ground a bare grain, say of wheat, and it undergoes a process of dissolution and decay. But, lo and behold, out of that bare grain springs up at the appointed time a new organization, wonderfully different from that bare grain, and yet identical with it, for it is not a matter of uncertainty what springs up, but your grain of wheat produces *wheat*, just as a grain of barley would produce barley: "to every seed his own body." And this principle holds good though man is not a vegetable but an animal organization. For

man is an organic creature quite distinct from the organization of beasts or fishes or birds, and therefore, when you ask me with what kind of body the dead come, I answer, why with human bodies to be sure, and not any other kind. Still I would have you to observe that some organizations are adapted by God to celestial conditions and environment, while others are adapted to terrestrial conditions, and between these two classes, as also in each class, there are wonderful differences of glory. Even in the heavenly region things are not on a level, but one star differeth from another star in glory. Now all this applies to the resurrection of the dead. When they die it is in the earthly state, a state of corruption, dishonour, and weakness, like the seed that you sow. When they are raised it is in the heavenly state, a state of incorruption, glory, and power.

The difference, he continues, may be otherwise expressed by saying that our life now is *animal* (soulish) whereas our life hereafter will be spiritual, and our organization will be developed correspondingly. What this means you may best understand if I say that now we are in the same condition as Adam, whom God fashioned of the dust, frail and mutable, subject to vanity; then we shall be in the same condition as Jesus Christ, Whom God raised from the dead in the power of an endless life, and hath crowned with glory and honour.

[Such we believe to be a fair paraphrase of this important passage. We regret therefore that a theologian of such repute as Dean Alford should in his commentary represent the apostle as insisting on the non-identity of the seed with the future plant, whence the commentator infers the non-identity of the body of which we have experience with the future body. We regret this because we think the Dean's phrase is capable of being interpreted in a sense which he did not intend. We may, indeed, raise the question, in passing, whether the apostle intended his analogy to be applied to the body only, whether, in short, that which corresponds to the sowing of a seed in his metaphor is not

the death of a man, involving the temporary separation of spirit and soul from the body, rather than the mere interment of a corpse. This would certainly seem to be the case in the application of the same metaphor by our Lord to Himself (John xii. 24). But, to waive this point, let us consider what is really meant by identity in the present connection. The word itself is of very ambiguous and complex import. To take a few examples: is a horse-shoe identical with the piece of iron out of which it is wrought? Is the river which flows under Westminster Bridge identical with the streamlet which rises in Gloucestershire? Is the sound produced by striking one of the keys of a piano identical with the sound produced by striking the same key again? Is a wide spread tree identical with the slender sapling out of which it has grown? Is a butterfly identical with the caterpillar which existed before the chrysalis? Much ingenious argument may be expended on either side of these questions. We are only concerned to note that the word identity will be found to have different meanings in the different cases. But to say that St. Paul teaches the non-identity of the seed with the future plant is to exclude identity of every kind and in every respect. This seems to us to be going too far. No doubt the apostle does insist on the difference in constitution, properties and splendour between "the body that shall be" and the body that now is. Wonderful indeed is the contrast between the exquisite beauty of the flower and the meanness of the seed from which it has sprung. Wonderful the unlikeness of the bird in its rapturous flight to the inert egg from which it has been evolved. Yet these are nothing to the contrast between this body of our humiliation and the body in which we shall be "conformed to the image of God's Son." But on the other hand there is surely a continuity, a necessary connection, between the seed and the plant. And if we are to allow that the illustration which the apostle uses has any analogical force at all, it must surely



be conceded that his analogy goes to prove *some* continuity *some* necessary connection between the body that now is which is dissolved in death, and that spiritual body with which the dead in Christ shall rise. If you will not call this necessary connection identity, so be it. Only let the truth of that connection be maintained.]

Let us next consider what identity means in our present experience of the human body. When a child is born we see a small and tender body. If the child be duly tended and nourished its body increases in size and strength, and its organization is gradually developed. Does anyone say or think that the body of the mature man is not identical with the body of the babe? As years pass on the vigour of the body decreases, some of its organs become decayed, the very framework shrinks. But has not the hoary-headed tottering old man the same body that he had in youth? Can we not trace the same features, do not birth-marks and scars remain indelible? Surely we must all agree that the continuity and identity are unbroken. And yet we know that all through life our bodies are in a state of continual decay and change. We are assured by science that in the body of the adult there is not one particle left of all that constituted the body of the infant. There has been going on a perpetual dissolution and reconstitution of *the same body*. Now what are death and resurrection but another example of dissolution and reconstitution, in which, however, the two processes are separated by an interval, instead of going on simultaneously. It is as easy for God to bring together the necessary constituents by an act of creative power, as to supply them by the natural alimentary processes. In both cases He does it, [as we conceive] in such a way as to preserve the essential identity of the body, however changed its condition may be. *How* He does it either in the constant reconstitution of mortal life or in the final reconstitution of immortality, science cannot explain in the one case, nor faith in the other.

These considerations may be reinforced by an argument derived from the constitution of human nature. Here we may quote some sentences from Bishop Westcott's work, "The Gospel of the Resurrection."<sup>1</sup> "Nothing is more common," he writes, "than to hear it assumed that the 'soul' is the real self. Yet nothing can be more clear upon reflection than that the only 'self' of which we are conscious is made up of 'soul' and 'body.'" "Our present personality involves the antithesis of soul and body." "The body is not destroyed by death. Its union with the soul is for a time (as we are forced to conceive of it, though perhaps quite wrongly) interrupted but not closed." This seems to us at once sound doctrine and sound philosophy. It brings out the important point that the body is an essential and permanent part in every human personality. Curiously enough in common language the word *person* is often used to indicate the body alone. Thus we may say that a woman has a beautiful *person*, meaning thereby her bodily charms as distinguished from graces of character. Or again, we speak of offences against the *person* to indicate assaults upon the body, as distinguished from offences against property. This use of the word may remind us that man is not a mere spirit inhabiting a body, capable of transmigration into other bodies as described in Indian fables. Man *is* body as much as he is soul and spirit, and to the identity of the whole personal man the identity of the three constituents seems essential.

This would be our answer to the remark often made that Scripture speaks of the resurrection of the dead but never of the resurrection of the body. The remark is true, but Scripture defines man as consisting of spirit, soul, and body, and appears to us to teach that if the dead rise not with their own bodies (the same bodies in some sense) they would not remain the same persons. But as to the mode in which this identity, or continuity, or connection, between the body

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ii, §§ 5, 7, 18.

that now is and the resurrection body shall be secured, we have nothing at all to say. There are those who maintain that it will be by identity of material particles, and this view has been held not only by the simple and unlearned but by minds of the first class. Bishop Pearson expresses it in sonorous rhetoric thus: "Whatsoever we lose in death, is not lost to God; as no creature could be made out of nothing but by Him, so can it not be reduced into nothing but by the same: though, therefore, the parts of the body of man be dissolved, yet they perish not; they lose not their own entity when they part with their relation to humanity: they are laid up in the secret places, and lodged in the chambers of nature, and it is no more a contradiction that they should become the parts of the same body of man to which they did belong than that after his death they should become the parts of any other body, as we see they do. Howsoever they are scattered, or wheresoever lodged, they are within the knowledge and power of God, and can have no repugnancy by their separation to be reunited when and how He pleaseth."<sup>1</sup> Our comment on this is that there would be nothing incredible in the idea, if God had revealed it to be His will; but as He does not seem to have done so it is better not to attempt to define what He has left obscure. That there must be *some* real connection between man's mortal body and the body of the resurrection seems certain, for otherwise the word resurrection and St. Paul's expression the "redemption of our body" would seem to be inaccurate and misleading phrases; but how this shall be is one of the secret things which belong to the Lord our God, whose judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out.<sup>7</sup>

We now proceed to consider another consequence of Christ's resurrection, which is treated by St. Paul in the latter part of this same chapter to the Corinthians. We have already remarked that St. Paul takes up the whole topic

<sup>1</sup> Pearson on the Creed, Art. xi.

of the resurrection of the dead *incidentally*, so to speak, in answer to difficulties that had been raised. There is a tone of pained surprise about his opening words, "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead," as if he were astonished that there could be any doubt about so elementary a truth. And it may surprise you to notice, when your attention is called to the point, how seldom the subject is directly treated in the apostolic epistles generally. The reason seems to be plain. The truth that the dead should rise again was already familiar to the Jews. The resurrection of Christ did not in this respect reveal to them a new idea, but was a token and foretaste of the promise made of God unto their fathers. That the dead are raised even Moses showed at the bush, as the Lord pointed out to the Sadducees; and Martha knew very well that her brother should rise again in the resurrection at the last day. So far there was nothing new, and St. Paul is evidently shocked that the Corinthians were slipping back even lower than the Jewish standpoint, instead of grasping the full and new significance of the resurrection of Christ. What, then, is this new significance, what is the distinctive feature of the Christian Gospel? Is it that sins may be forgiven? No, David knew that, though we know more about it. Is it that the dead shall be raised? No, Abraham knew that, though we have seen the proof of it. The new thing is this—would that the words could be thundered in the ears of all the baptized—Christ's resurrection has not only assured the resurrection of the dead, but it has done away with the necessity that man should die. Hitherto there has been one law, "We must needs die: what man is he that liveth and shall not see death?" Now this is no longer true. The resurrection of Christ is the bringing in of a better hope, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Mark the emphatic tone in which the apostle opens this part of his subject, as if he were glad to have reached the really important point. "Now this I say, brethren, that



flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Flesh and blood is evidently his equivalent for human nature in its mortal condition; and we call to mind at once the significant variation in the words of the Risen Saviour, "a spirit hath not flesh and *bones* as ye see me have." God did not suffer His Holy One to see corruption, but in His resurrection Jesus put on incorruption. A similar change must pass on us, but not necessarily through death. [This is the mystery which the apostle declares. By a mystery St. Paul means here, as often elsewhere, something long concealed in the counsels of God, but now revealed. So great a thing as this had indeed not entered into the heart of man. Resurrection of the dead the faithful had embraced. But to escape death altogether, to pass into immortality without tasting of death, this was something unthought of, undreamed, though the cases of Enoch and Elijah were prophecies of it. Yet this and nothing else the gospel declares to be the object of faith. And this, be it observed, is said to constitute the whole point of Christ's triumph and reward. He has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; what is to be the proof of it? Not only that the dead are raised, but that the need of dying, which resulted from sin, is abolished. And, therefore, the apostle does not say that the triumph is consummated when the dead are raised incorruptible, but] "when this corruptible shall *have put on* incorruption, and this mortal shall have *put on* immortality,—when the living are changed—*then* shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory."

[Strange and sad it is to note how soon and how completely this hope faded from the hearts of Christian men. Already in the fourth century the copyists had tampered with the text in order to adapt St. Paul's words to their present experience, and in some cases reversed the apostle's sentence by transferring the negative particle to the second

clause; while to this day the great Latin church gives its official sanction to St. Jerome's version, which runs, we shall all indeed rise again; but we shall not all be changed.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the question is one which hangs upon a single text. Rather we might say that the non-necessity of dying, the hope of change to immortality without death, are the very pith and marrow of the New Testament Scriptures. It is appointed unto men *once* to die, says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. This was the consequence of the fall. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. The reign of death was co-extensive with the dominion of sin. But now Christ has been once offered to take away sin. And St. Paul writes: "We thus judge that if one died for all then *all died*."<sup>1</sup> That sentence of death which lay heavy upon all men has been exhausted by the death of Christ. It is no longer inevitable that men should die. Life and immortality have been brought to light through the Gospel.

Still more pointedly is the matter put by St. Paul in that fifth chapter of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians to which reference has already been made. He tells them that he had himself been near to death, but that this did not shake his confidence, because he knew that even if this earthly constitution of our nature should be dissolved God will re-constitute it in the heavenly region in a better and eternal state. He remarks that even dying has this compensation, that it permits a closer communion with Christ than is possible in *mortal* life. Still it is not his wish to die. True, we that are in this tabernacle of mortality must groan, being burdened; but yet he would not be *unclothed*. No, his desire is to be clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life. And then follows this uncompromising sentence, which we might almost think had been expunged from Christian Bibles." "Now He that wrought

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 14.

us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”<sup>1</sup> This very thing—being clothed upon—being changed into immortality without seeing death—this is the object of all God’s dealings with you. For this God has redeemed you by Christ’s blood, for this He has preached to you the gospel, for this He has regenerated you, for this He has sealed you with the Holy Ghost, that He who raised up Jesus from the dead may also quicken your *mortal* bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

In face of such considerations how wonderful, how humbling it is to reflect that for centuries the staple of Christian preaching has been the necessity, the propriety, and even the desirableness of death. *Mors janua vitæ*, death is the door of life, men have said, and so with a rhetorical flourish the special hope of the gospel is abandoned. Do we not know by experience that all over Christendom the most faithful and pious pastors are ever exhorting their flocks to prepare for death? Think of an earnest and devoted Christian like Charles Kingsley writing that his ambition was to *die*. And yet it is supposed that the Scriptures are the test of doctrine and practice, and men marvel at the Jews because they ignored the plain statements of the Old Testament. Where, then, do the Scriptures speak of death as the door of life? St. Paul says it is God’s enemy, which must be destroyed. Where in all the recorded sayings of the Lord Jesus does He instruct His disciples to look or prepare for death? Where in the Acts of the Apostles is there a trace of such teaching? Where in all the apostolic epistles is there a word that encourages or permits believers to look for death as the end of their course, even in the three or four passages in which apostles contemplate their own decease?

One solitary text of Scripture may be quoted, and is quoted, besides those passing references to death which have been noticed. In the Apocalypse St. John writes: “I

heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." It is a comforting word, which we doubt not expresses a present truth. But its immediate application is to the time of the end and to those who endure the persecution of the beast. How slender a justification for the substitution of death, even if it be death in the Lord, for the blessed hope of the glory that shall be revealed in us by the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.]

But it is said, the apostles wrote as they did because they contemplated the coming again of the Lord within the limits of ordinary life, and in this they proved to be mistaken. Therefore it is quite right now to teach and preach conformably with the results of experience. One is tempted to ask, was then the Lord Jesus Christ mistaken too? And there is reason to fear that some would answer that He was, or at least that He accommodated His language to the ideas of the time. For our part we would prefer to err with St. Paul than to be wise with his critics. But not for one moment would we admit that they were mistaken in what they taught. Not so. Necessity was laid upon them to preach the gospel, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Therefore they shunned not to declare to the church all the counsel of God. But none knew better than they who proclaimed the hope of the promise that only through faith and patience can God's promise be inherited. They saw with bitter grief that faith was already waning and love waxing cold. They perceived with anguish that the realization of the covenant must be long deferred. They even foresaw that mockers would arise who would argue backwards from the experience of unbelief to the denial of the truth of God, instead of testing the real value of facts by the record of God's unchangeable will. But never did the apostles consent to become unfaithful stewards, or to abate one jot or tittle of the gospel of Christ.

And now by the ministry of apostles restored to His

one Catholic Church, God has revived in our hearts the hope of the gospel, and has sealed us unto the day of redemption. Brethren, why have I gone at such length over ground that I know to be familiar to you all? Because it is written, "So run that ye may obtain." The crown is not to him that takes things easily, but to him that strives as though only one could receive the prize. It is not enough to know these things. Happy are we if we do them. Many Christian people nowadays study the Scriptures about the Lord's coming and like to talk about it. Ask your brother Christian whether he hopes never to die, but to be changed into immortality without seeing death. Too often a smile of incredulous surprise will show you that he thinks you either trifling with him or a little mad to ask the question. But now put the same question to yourselves, and answer it honestly. Do not deceive yourselves with phrases about submission to the will of God. When Jesus said, "Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done," it was because He knew that the thing for which the weakness of the flesh had constrained Him to cry out was *not* the will of God. But you, on the contrary, know that it *is* the will of God that this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. It is His good, acceptable, and perfect will, which has not yet been accomplished because He has never yet found the holy shamelessness<sup>1</sup> of faith to cry for its accomplishment.

Oh, for this God has gathered us together, for this God would be entreated, for this He would have each and all of us wrestle with Him in prayer, till in the breaking of the day we have power with God and prevail. He tells us that He prepares His chosen witnesses to flash the joyful tidings through an astonished world, and rouse to faith multitudes of His children who have forgotten their true hope. Let us not fail Him at this last hour, but *press* toward the mark for the prize of the high calling. For our citizenship, our

<sup>1</sup> Luke, xi. 8.



country, our proper sphere is in heaven, and therefore we look not for death but for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change this body of our humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

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## THE TRANSITION TO A NEW DISPENSATION.

*Pentecost. May, 29, 1898*

Acts, ii. 7. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans?

THE significance of God's greatest acts is dimly apprehended at the first even by the immediate witnesses, and this whether they are believing or unbelieving. Many instances of this familiar truth might be cited from the Scriptures. It may suffice to refer at once to the greatest example of all, namely, the Incarnation. The Son of God came into the world, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own things, and they that were His own received Him not. Even those who did receive Him, those who in simplicity of heart gave heed to the testimony of the Forerunner, awoke very slowly to an appreciation of His Person, and only very gradually apprehended the range and import of His work. We need not, then, feel surprise that what happened in the case of one Divine Person is repeated at the Coming of Another. The Eternal Spirit comes down upon those who have been prepared to receive Him. Certainly they on whom He fell had little consciousness at the time how marvellous was the gift they had received, how enormous the stride which it betokened in the advance of God's plans, how vast and far-reaching the consequences which must ensue. On the other hand, there were not wanting those who mocked. As men had said of the Word made flesh, Is not this the carpenter's son? so at Pentecost there are those whose first thought is one of contempt for the humble persons in whom the Holy Ghost manifests His

presence. Are not all these which speak Galilæans? Yes, indeed they were. But how little they that uttered the scoff perceived that they were thereby announcing their own condemnation, and revealing that the nation of the Jews, headed up in their official representatives, priests, scribes, and rulers, had been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

For judgment I am come into this world, said the Lord Jesus,<sup>1</sup> that they which see not might see; and they which see might be made blind. The event of Pentecost was at once a proof and a fresh illustration of this solemn saying.

Let us follow out both these lines of thought somewhat more at large.

And first as to the significance of the Pentecostal wonder in relation to the Divine counsels. We cannot do better than follow the exposition given by St. Peter at the time, which, though necessarily limited, sets forth abiding principles. The apostle begins by declaring that the descent of the Holy Ghost with its accompanying marvels is nothing strange, nothing that ought to have been unexpected. It is not something off the line, so to speak, of God's ancient covenant, but is in the strict sequence of that one purpose of which God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began.<sup>2</sup> In the same way the Lord Himself appealed to the Scriptures to show the reasonableness, the necessity, of those things which astonished the disciples. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"<sup>3</sup> It is a principle of permanent validity. God's actings will ever be in pursuance of His one revealed purpose, and in fulfilment of the prophecies that have gone before. And they to whom the Scriptures have been given will be responsible, if ignoring the authority of Christ Himself and the witness of the Church, or deceived by the sleight of men, they hear not Moses and the prophets, and so the fulfilment of the written word finds them unprepared.

<sup>1</sup> John, ix. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Luke, i. 70.

<sup>3</sup> Luke, xxiv. 26.

We notice next how instructive is this example of the manner in which prophecy may be fulfilled. What Jew reading Joel's prediction about the outpouring of the Spirit, the signs in heaven and earth, the blood and fire and vapour of smoke, could have imagined that so august an announcement could be fulfilled in the persons of a few obscure Galilæans hidden in a corner of Jerusalem? Yet this is the fact that St. Peter affirms. Would that our brethren who think the Lord's work of revival in these days so much beneath contempt could take the hint. Yet of course it must be conceded that the Day of Pentecost was only an inchoate fulfilment of Joel's words. A beginning has been made, the stream of life and power has begun to flow, which shall ultimately reach to "all flesh." The present result is the Church, small enough on the Day of Pentecost, though in itself a sign that the last days are come, that a new creation has been begun, that that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away, that therefore the end of all things has drawn near. But, after all, the Church is an election, and the Christian dispensation is the prelude to a larger revelation. The promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God *shall call*. Thus St. Peter concludes his address.

"God begat us," writes St. James, "that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."<sup>1</sup> Christ Himself was the first-fruits of them that slept, the antitype of that sheaf of the first ripe corn which was offered under the law upon the third day from the Passover.<sup>2</sup> But the Church is also a kind of first-fruits, the antitype (in the larger aspect) of the two loaves which were the peculiar offering in the Jewish feast of Pentecost,<sup>3</sup> the election from both Jews and Gentiles, made to partake already of Christ's heavenly life and power, and therefore symbolized by wheat instead of barley, but as yet affected with mortality, as indicated by the admixture of the leaven, waiting for Christ's return to be revealed as the company of two armies, when the dead shall be raised

<sup>1</sup> James, i. 18

<sup>2</sup> Lev. xxiii. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Lev. xxiii. 17.

and the living changed and the Israel of God shall stand forth incorruptible.]

Yet after this there is a further and wider festival. There remains the Feast of Tabernacles,<sup>1</sup> the great ingathering, when "the end cometh," when the nations walk in the light of the new Jerusalem, when God shall be all in all. Far, then, is St. Peter from intending that his application of Joel's words to the experiences of that day was exhaustive. The prophecy stretches through more than one dispensation. And there is in it also a subdued note of warning, which the apostle judiciously does not make prominent, but which has an ominous sound for every dispensation. "There shall be deliverance in the remnant whom the Lord shall call."<sup>2</sup> *In the remnant.* [One fulfilment of the word was there before their eyes.] The Shepherd of Israel had come and gone, yet Israel had not been gathered. Nevertheless God had found a remnant, these unlearned and ignorant Galilæans, in whom He could carry on His work and make the transition from one dispensation to another. And shall it be so again? Oh, let every Christian read the Scripture with his eyes open and consider. Let those consider who feel secure in their personal communion with God, let those consider who boast of their succession from antiquity, or who repose upon God's infallible promises to His Church without marking the conditions. Let us all remember the word of another apostle. "Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear."<sup>3</sup>

In the second part of his address St. Peter comes to closer quarters with his hearers. He now declares to them not only that the outpouring of the Spirit foretold by Joel has taken place, but that it is the immediate consequence and effect of the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus. Again he appeals to Scripture to show them that it was foretold that the Messiah should die, it was foretold

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xxiii. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Joel, ii. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xi. 20.



that He should be raised again without seeing corruption, and should be exalted to the right hand of God. All this was a new and wonderful opening of the Scripture to his hearers. But then comes the agonizing conclusion: All this has been fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye by wicked hands have crucified and slain. "God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ."<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult for us adequately to realize how frightful was such an impeachment in the ears of a Jew. The idea presented involved an upheaval of his most cherished traditions, and shattered the foundations which he fancied most secure. What, can it be possible that priests and rulers, scribes and pharisees, have all been wrong? The successors of Moses, the guardians of the law, the scrupulous observers of its every precept, the models of a truly religious life, have all been so desperately blind? Can it be, oh horror even to think of it, that Messiah has been in the midst of us, and we not only did not recognize Him, but actually put Him to death? Even so, for are not all these which speak Galilæans? No wonder they were cut to the heart and cried in despair, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

The point which we are endeavouring to illustrate is a familiar one. It is that in the evolution of God's design in Creation and Redemption, the occasion for the transition to every new stage or dispensation is always found in the general failure of those who have been the subjects of God's dealings and the recipients of His grace in the stage preceding. The occasion, we say, not the cause. The cause is ever to be found in Christ, in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen, who alone never fails, who comes to the rescue when all seems lost, not only to remedy our failures, but to achieve that further end which

<sup>1</sup> Acts, ii. 36.

our failure had seemed to put in jeopardy. That no flesh should glory in His presence, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, these are the subject and the counter-subject of the great theme for which every age supplies a variation. In Eden, at the Flood, at Babel, in Israel, the one burden of all history appears and re-appears. But in reading the Gospels we are liable to be so pre-occupied by our own interests in the blessed events which they depict, that we may fail to observe the special relation of our Lord's ministry to the people of the old covenant, or to perceive how definitely God's long-standing controversy with His people was brought to an issue. The gospel of St. John deserves to be specially studied in this connection. We are all acquainted with the fact that St. John alone records the incidents of our Lord's ministry in Judæa and Jerusalem before His final entry, omitting, with one remarkable exception, all the scenes in Galilee; while the Synoptic Gospels, as they are called, record His ministry in Galilee only, until the time of His Passion was come. But many a reader who rejoices in the spiritual treasures which St. John has enshrined in his narrative may miss one point at which St. John is aiming, namely to show how God caused a solemn, definite and official testimony to be borne to the nation in its official heads and representatives, first by John the Baptist, then by Jesus Himself, which testimony was peremptorily rejected. And this rejection is decisive. After His first cleansing of the Temple Jesus waits till the Forerunner is silenced. Then He comes again to Jerusalem and does one miracle.<sup>1</sup> Instantly rejection developes into persecution; the resolution to kill Him is taken, and never departed from. All further visits are made in peril of His life, which is preserved by miracle more than once, until the one great day when the Hosannas of the Galilæan multitude coming up to the feast give Him a semblance of security,

<sup>1</sup> John, v.

even of triumph. This rouses the rulers to bestir themselves indeed, and they carry out their rejection to its logical conclusion.

Now it was this uncompromising rejection by all the recognized authorities of the nation at Jerusalem which led the Lord to turn His course from Judæa to Galilee, despised Galilee, Galilee of the Gentiles. Herein, as St. Matthew teaches us, He fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias.

The light which the men of Jewry hated, to which they would not come, diverts its rays to shine upon them which sat in darkness in the region and shadow of death.<sup>1</sup> Here Jesus begins to act upon the invariable principle. He begins to choose foolish things of the world to confound the wise,<sup>2</sup> weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty,<sup>3</sup> base things of the world, things which are despised, things which are not, to bring to naught things that are.<sup>2</sup> In Galilee He quietly prepares a few disciples.

They are indeed of Israel, of the one stock and seed of Abraham, but altogether unconnected with the party of orthodox tradition, without any ecclesiastical training or legal erudition. They are simple ignorant men, who are very slow to apprehend their Master's teaching, who say and do many foolish things, and would provoke to impatience any other leader. But He bears with them, He is tender to them, He overlooks both their foolishness and their presumption. Gradually He fashions and prepares them, till, without their own consciousness, yea, almost in their own despite, He fits them to be the stepping stone from one dispensation to another, the link by which the transition is made from the spiritual plane of the law to the higher and more glorious level of the Body of Christ. And now, on the Day of Pentecost, the result both of His rejection in Judæa and of His work in Galilee is disclosed. The Spirit is poured from on high, the transition from the lower level to the higher is made. And lo, the first-fruits of the new age

<sup>1</sup> Matt. iv. 16.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. i. 27.

are found not in the wise, the scribe, the princes of this world, but "behold, all these which speak are Galilæans."

While thus dwelling on our main point, namely the proof given by the event at Pentecost of the failure in the previous dispensation, let us not be supposed to forget the happier side of the matter. In spite of all opposition by His enemies, of all mistakes by His friends, Jesus has triumphed. The pleasure of the Lord has prospered in His hand. Though it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, to put Him to grief, to make His soul an offering for sin, yet God hath not withholden the request of His lips. He asked life and God gave it to Him, and now He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, He shall see of the travail of His soul.<sup>1</sup> This began when Jesus, at the right hand of the majesty on high, sent down upon His beloved the Spirit of truth, the Comforter, by whose illumination they should be led into all truth, by whose energy they should be enabled to do greater works than Jesus Himself had done, by whose indwelling they should be prepared for visible re-union with their Master and Lord. For this end it had been necessary that He should go away. The disciples had been pained at the prospect of separation, even as Elisha's soul was heavy when the Lord would take his master from his head. But now they have seen Him taken up from them, and now the double portion of His Spirit, the elder brother's portion, rests upon them, and they are filled with great joy. As Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah and said "Where is the Lord God of Elijah,"<sup>2</sup> so with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. The word in their lips is quick and powerful, and the results astonishing. Three thousand souls are added to them in one day, the number grew to five thousand a few days later. We are reminded of the word of the prophet: "Shall a nation be born at once? as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her

<sup>1</sup> Isai. liii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings, ii. 14.

children."<sup>1</sup> But let it be ever observed that the preaching of the gospel was directed towards and effectual among those very people who "sometime were disobedient." Some are found, yea many, who, though they had refused Jesus when He spake on earth, yet turn not away from Him that speaketh from heaven through the lips of His servants, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. In Jerusalem, we are told a little later on, in Jerusalem, where the testimony of Jesus had been so absolutely unheeded, the number of the disciples multiplied greatly; and, most wonderful of all, a great company of the priests, the Lord's most relentless foes, because most filled with perverted zeal, even a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith.<sup>2</sup> These were the triumphs of divine love. The ministry of Elisha is first for healing. The salt that had been lacking is supplied, even living faith in the covenant God.<sup>3</sup> And when it is supplied the waters that have been fouled become clear and refreshing, and the ground that had been barren brings forth fruit for the master's use. On the other hand the ministry of Elisha is a two-edged sword. Swift judgment overtakes the mockers. Blasphemy against the Son of Man is forgiven, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not. The contradiction of sinners against Jesus was endured with much long-suffering. But when it can be truly said "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost" judgment follows.

We can not, however, be too often reminded that judgment ultimately overtook Jerusalem and the nation of the Jews, not because of the national failure to receive the testimony of John the Baptist and the Lord, to which we have already adverted, but because afterwards, when the failure had been proved by the facts of Pentecost, when the transition to the new dispensation had been made in the persons of the Galilæan remnant, when nevertheless the invitation was renewed to repent, and to share in the blessings for which the faith of others had supplied the

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lxvi. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Acts, vi. 7.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Kings, ii. 20.



vehicles, *then* their neck was as an iron sinew and their brow brass,<sup>1</sup> and they refused the preaching of Jesus and the Resurrection. Everywhere the Gospel is first preached to the Jews. Not till they judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life does God forsake His covenanted people.

I shall have failed in my design if I have not already suggested to the minds of my hearers some historical and prophetic analogies. Analogy, whether applied to matters spiritual or natural, is of course a mode of reasoning which must be employed with caution. Sometimes it supplies us with broad outlines, of which the details cannot be filled in. Sometimes it gives only dim suggestions of which the very outline cannot be defined. But the principle of analogy is sanctioned for us by the usage of the Lord Himself, and of His apostles, and there are striking examples of it in the Scriptures. Is there then any clear analogy drawn in Scripture between the close of the Christian dispensation and of those which have preceded it? The question is answered as soon as asked, but perhaps there is no more wonderful example of the blindness which besets us all when we are not willing to see, than the general consent of Christian people and Christian teachers to ignore the force of the analogy declared. "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." So speaks the Lord. But He cannot mean, say religious people in affright, He cannot mean that the dispensation of the Gospel shall end in general failure, that there shall be a cataclysm which shall overwhelm Christendom and make it desolate, that the transition to the dispensation of the manifested Kingdom of Christ shall be accomplished in a remnant. This however is what He does say, He whose words shall never pass away. Oh! but it can only mean that the ungodly shall be overtaken, those who have never been truly converted to God, those who have not rightly used the Church's Sacraments, those who are heretical and

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xlviii. 4.

do not abide under the safe guardianship of Christ's representatives. Thus every section of the one Church applies the warning to others, and there is none to cry: "O Lord to us belongeth confusion of faces, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, because we have sinned against Thee."<sup>1</sup> And so the canker eats; the apostasy which the apostles discerned to be already begun, and of which they foretold the dreadful consummation, creeps on and on. We hold our breath as it were, awaiting every moment the signal that the hour is come for the windows of heaven to be opened, and the fountains of the great deep to be broken up.<sup>2</sup>

But certainly God will first make secure the transition to another age. Already He has borne a solemn and official testimony to Christendom, to the rulers in Church and State, and that testimony has been ignored. Already He has proclaimed the same testimony far and wide among the baptized, appealing to the Scriptures, setting before them the pattern of His house as it should be, and the state in which it is. Once more He has chosen weak things and base things, and things which are despised, and things which are not. It remains that to a remnant first shall be fulfilled the One Hope, and the prize of the high calling be bestowed, in the passing from mortality to incorruption without seeing death, in our gathering together unto Christ.

Oh, dare we push our analogies a little further? When this is done, when one is taken and another left, when God has brought to the birth and the man-child is caught up to God, shall there not follow a sound from heaven as at Pentecost? Shall not chosen witnesses be found who shall prophesy, and speak in tongues of men and angels the wonderful works of God? And shall not their testimony cut to the heart, provoking on one side the rage of the adversaries, but also, as we trust, inducing a great multitude

<sup>1</sup> Dan. ix. 7, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. vii. 11.

to cry out in true contrition, Men and brethren, what shall we do? We speak as with bated breath. We fear to trespass into the secret things which belong unto the Lord our God. “But those things which are revealed belong unto us.”<sup>1</sup> Certain it is that the ministry of Elisha shall follow that of Elijah, and accomplish that for which God has appointed it. Certain it is that the feasts of the Lord shall find their due fulfilment in relation to the Church. The sheaf of first-fruits shall be sure, but the two loaves shall not be wanting. And both shall but prepare the way for the glorious ingathering, when He that is both Sower and Reaper shall come with all His sheaves, when the One Catholic Church shall be displayed in the glory of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxix. 29.

Henry  
May 25, 1902

A SERMON.

*The Acceptable Year of the Lord*

*"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."—ISA. lxi. 1.*

THUS speaks the servant of Jehovah, the Messiah, concerning His office. The acceptable year of the Lord is the year of God's special grace and favour. Such a year was for Israel always the fiftieth year. Concerning this the Lord spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai, saying, "In the fiftieth year thou shalt cause the trumpet of Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land; and ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family."<sup>1</sup> The trumpets, whose sounding announced the jubilee, appear to have been curved or bent

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<sup>1</sup> LEV. xxv. 9, 10.



horns ; the Jewish rabbis say, that rams' horns were used on this occasion, and that every Hebrew blew nine blasts, so as to make the trumpet literally "sound throughout the land." The word, "jubilee," or rather, according to the original text, "jobel," can be translated by restoration or restitution ; for this year restored or brought back all things in the land of Israel to their former estate. Every Israelite returned in this year to "his possession and to his family ;" that is, he recovered his right in the land, originally allotted to the family of which he was a member, if he, or his ancestor, had parted with it. And all Israelites who had become bondmen, either to their countrymen, or to resident foreigners, were set free in the jubilee.

Considering all this, we understand that the year of jubilee has an important spiritual significance. We know that by the sin of Adam all men were fallen under the power of the enemy ; they were bound as captives in his prison, they dwelt in darkness and in the land of the shadow of death. But God sent them help from heaven, Jesus, the Son of the Father, came in the likeness of sinful flesh, to condemn sin in the flesh, and to deliver those who were bound with the chain of their sins from the captivity of the prince of this world. To do this mighty work He was enabled by the anointing of the Holy Ghost. After having received the Holy Ghost, He overcame the adversary in the wilderness, and then, returning in the power of the

Spirit into Galilee, He announced in the synagogue of Nazareth, when He had read on a sabbath the prophecy of Isaiah we have heard: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."<sup>1</sup> And the truth of these words was manifested by His following wondrous deeds. He preached the gospel to the poor, He healed the broken-hearted, saying to them: "Your sins be forgiven you," and comforting all those who were labouring and were heavy laden: "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." Anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. The blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised up. Thus all Israel had opportunity to acknowledge, that a time of refreshing and restitution was come.

But this was only the first beginning of the great jubilee. For not by His preaching, nor by His great wonders and miracles, but through *death* He, the Holy One of God, the anointed Son of the Father, destroyed him that had the power of death, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.<sup>2</sup> And then came the joyful day, when the Crucified and Risen One, after His ascension into heaven, sent down upon His elect the same Holy Ghost, whom he had received from His Father. Then, like a trumpet of God, the

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<sup>1</sup> LUKE iv. 21.

<sup>2</sup> HEBREWS ii. 14, 15.

preaching of Peter on the feast of Pentecost, and also after the healing of the lame man, proclaimed to the people of Israel that the blessings of the great jubilee, the times of refreshing and restitution, should come from the presence of the Lord.<sup>1</sup> At the same time also the ram's horn sounded throughout the holy city. We know that the ram is a type of the deacon. And we read in the sixth and seventh chapter of the Acts, that after the preaching of Peter, Stephen, the mighty deacon, full of faith and power, especially bore witness to the people and to the council of the Jews. Yea, the accepted time, the day of salvation, the acceptable year of the Lord, was come by the sending of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost.<sup>2</sup> For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is *liberty*;<sup>3</sup> there are bestowed the benefits of the year of jubilee, as it is written: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us *free* from the law of sin and death."<sup>4</sup> As the redeemed children of God, we shall return "to our family and our possession." For the Heavenly Father has given us the promise of the everlasting "inheritance."

But it doth *not yet* appear what we shall be. We know that the fall of man took its beginning in the *spirit* of man. In the likewise the restitution begins in the spirit. At first we shall be trans-

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<sup>1</sup> ACTS ii. 17, 18, 21, 39; iii. 21.      <sup>2</sup> COR. ii. 6, 2.

2 COR. iii. 17.

<sup>4</sup> ROM. viii. 2.

formed by the renewing of our *mind*, and be strengthened with might by the Spirit of God in the *inner man*.<sup>1</sup> However, although serving God in newness of spirit, we are still burdened, being in *this* tabernacle, in this our vile and mortal *body*;<sup>2</sup> and therefore we wait for the manifestation of the sons of God, for the redemption of our body,<sup>3</sup> for that glorious day, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life. The present condition shall pass away and the Lord will make all things new. The mystery of the jubilee is now hidden; but it shall be brought to its full development. The regeneration which has begun in the spirits of the redeemed, shall also change their bodies; for if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us.<sup>4</sup> At the last trumpet the church of the living God, His elect, shall enter into incorruption and immortality<sup>5</sup> in the great jubilee of the heavenly Jerusalem. Then shall come the times of refreshing and restitution, the blessings of the true jubilee, also for Israel after the flesh. The people of the Old Covenant, now scattered abroad amongst the nations of the earth, shall be gathered together from the four winds, and the twelve tribes of Israel, converted to their Messiah, shall be restored to

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<sup>1</sup> ROM. xii. 2; EPH. iii. 16.    <sup>2</sup> 2 COR. v. 4.    <sup>3</sup> ROM. viii. 19-23.

ROM. viii. 11.    <sup>5</sup> 1 COR. xv. 52, 53.



their inheritance dwelling in Canaan; and Jerusalem, the city of David, rebuilt in a glory as never before, shall be the centre of the whole earth, the holy place, from whence all the nations shall receive their light and be filled with the benefits of the true Solomon. The divine blessings, coming down from the most holy place of the heavenly Jerusalem upon the holy place of the earthly, shall flow from thence into the outer court of the nations; yea, the blessings of this jubilee in the millennium shall also reach to the lower creation, which shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.<sup>1</sup> But in a still greater measure and glory, the jubilee, the acceptable year of the redeemed of the Lord, shall be developed; when, after the manifestation of a new heaven and a new earth, the holy city, new Jerusalem, comes down from God out of heaven upon the new earth, as a tabernacle of God with men. Then shall all bondage and misery be finished for ever; then every one of the redeemed and faithful shall come "to his family and his possession;" then shall be no more death, neither sorrow, neither any more pain; then shall be seen the times of the fullest refreshing and restitution in the new paradise with the river of life and the tree of life;<sup>2</sup> then shall be manifested those things which God has prepared for all that love Him, those things that eye hath not seen, nor

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<sup>1</sup> ROM. viii. 21.

REV. xxi. 1-4; xxii. 2.

ear heard, neither entered into the heart of man. And what shall be, so far as we know, the next mighty step to the full accomplishment of this glorious jubilee in the world to come? The lifting up of the first-fruits to the top of Mount Zion, in order that they may go forth as saviours of their brethren, bringing the times of refreshing and restitution for the whole Catholic church.

But, dear brethren, the joy of the jubilee must be preceded by a day of sorrow and humiliation. It is to be remarked, that the jubilee was not proclaimed upon the first day of the seventh month, nor did the restitution take place during the first ten days, but only at the close of the day of atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month. This is always the way of God : there is no acceptance with Him without preceding contrition and penitence.

Before Jesus preached in Nazareth, that the acceptable year of the Lord was come, John the Baptist had exhorted the people to penitence and humiliation, saying : “ Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Yea, Jesus Himself, the Holy One, as the Head of Israel, as the King of the Jews, received the baptism of repentance in the river of Jordan, before He proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord in His preaching at Nazareth. But He came unto His own, and His own received Him not, nor did they know the time of their visitation. However, the Lord did not forsake His chosen people. After the day of Pentecost, when the

spiritual jubilee was introduced, He offered them again the entrance into it, exhorting them by His apostle Peter: "Repent ye and be converted, in order that times of refreshing and of restitution of all things may come, at the second appearing of Jesus Christ, raised from the dead and exalted into the heavens."<sup>1</sup> Quite clearly these words say, that even then, although they had killed the Prince of Life, God would show His grace and mercy to the Jews, and lead them into the acceptable year of the Lord; but first they should repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out. Only after having observed a day of atonement they could receive the blessings of the jubilee.

This is also the condition in all times and all steps in the accomplishment of the purposes of God: without repentance and humiliation the promises of the Lord cannot be obtained. First must be a day of atonement; then the trumpet of jubilee shall sound. This is, so to say, the divine rule, at the several periods in the coming of the acceptable year of the Lord. At the end of the first apostolic time, when the Lord would bring His elect into the promised inheritance, He called them in the seven epistles to true repentance, that they might be prepared for the kingdom of heaven. And when St. John in the revelation of Christ saw the great multitude, whom no man could number, standing

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<sup>1</sup> Acts iii. 19-21.

before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, one of the elders said to him : " These are they which came out of the tribulation, the great one, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."<sup>1</sup> This cleansing by the blood of propitiation is not possible without true repentance and humiliation. Therefore we conclude from this passage that, before the great harvest can be gathered into the heavenly garner, and the marriage of the Lamb can come, the baptised people of the Lord in the time of the great tribulation must enter into the valley of the deepest penitence, in order that they may be delivered from all uncleanness in spirit and in flesh, and presented, holy and unspotted, with exceeding joy before the throne of the Lord in the acceptable year of the heavenly kingdom. And what is the way in which the twelve tribes of Israel shall be restored, and be brought together into the land of their inheritance in the latter days at the time of their great jubilee ? About this final restoration of Israel Jeremiah prophesies : " They shall come with *weeping*, and with *supplications* will I lead them, saith the Lord."<sup>2</sup> Then will Israel obey the word of St. Peter concerning the coming of the acceptable year of the Lord. After a great day of atonement, fulfilled with weeping in the deepest repentance, and with supplications for the Lord's grace and mercy, the trumpet of the long

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<sup>1</sup> REV. vii. 9, 13, 14.

<sup>2</sup> JEREM. xxxi. 9.

expected jubilee shall be heard by Israel, and then shall the whole nation, converted to its Saviour, return with gladness and thanksgiving to its "possession and its inheritance."

Did not once in the same way Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, after a long bondage in Mesopotamia, return to Canaan, which God had promised him as inheritance? Before he could be brought to the jubilee, so to say, he was led to the Jordan for true repentance concerning his past sins and shortcomings. At the river of Jabbok the Lord Himself hindered Jacob from entering into the promised land; for he was not ready for it because of his former transgressions. And how did Jacob prevail, wrestling with God in the silence of night, and receive the new name Israel? The prophet Hosea says, that Jacob prevailed, because he *wept* and made *supplication* unto the Lord.<sup>1</sup> Thus he fulfilled in a certain sense a day of atonement, and then he was prepared, to return "to his possession and inheritance."

And how did the true Israel of God, Jesus, the beloved Son of the Father, return "to His possession," to that glory which He had with His Father before the world was?<sup>2</sup> What did pass, before He ascended into heaven with the sound of the trumpet of jubilee?<sup>3</sup> He went to Gethsemane and Golgotha, He, the Holy One, burdened with the sins of the

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<sup>1</sup> HOSEA xii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> ST. JOHN xvii. 5.

Ps. xlvii. 5.



whole world. In the silence of night He wrestled with God in Gethsemane, offering up prayers and *supplications* with strong crying and *tears* unto Him, who was able to save Him from death.<sup>1</sup> And on the following day came the great atonement on Golgotha, when our iniquities separated between Him and His God, and our sins hid the Father's face from the only-begotten and beloved Son.

And now, dear brethren, what is the way, in which the Lord will lead *us*, His chosen first-fruits, to the top of the holy mountain? For us also a day of atonement in a certain manner and measure, a time of the deepest humiliation and penitence, of *tears* and *supplications*, is absolutely necessary if we will be prepared for the sound of the trumpet of jubilee, calling the first-fruits to Mount Zion. As at the end of the *first* apostolic time the Lord exhorted His churches: "Remember from whence you are fallen, and repent;" so also once again at the end of the *last* apostolic time He must speak to His sealed ones these same words: "Repent ye and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, in order that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." This is the only way for us to see the beginning of the eternal jubilee upon Mount Zion, when we now follow the Lamb, leading us into the valley of confession

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<sup>1</sup> HEBREWS v. 7.

and repentance. 'Through *weeping* and *supplications* we shall come to everlasting joy and gladness.

In the past days we have confessed the sins of the whole Catholic church before the Lord. Now the Lord moves and enlightens us more and more by the working of His Holy Ghost in our hearts, that we may acknowledge, confess, and repent also our sins and backslidings as the anointed *first-fruits* of the Lamb and our own *personal* transgressions and shortcomings.

The Lord said in the sermon on the Mount : " If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee ; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." We can apply these words in a certain sense to our present condition. Jesus, who is not ashamed to call us brethren, He, our elder brother, is leading us to the altar upon Mount Zion. Now He stands still with us on the way. He says to us : " You are not yet ready to be lifted up to the holy mountain, for I have a few things against you ; I have not found your works perfect before God ; you are not perfect in righteousness, in holiness, in love ; remember, therefore, how often you have grieved the heart of your elder brother, how little you have been a pattern and an example for all your baptised brethren ; remember all these things and repent." So speaks Jesus to us, not in wrath, but in love, in His heavenly love, which longs

for that day when His first-fruits shall be fully prepared to be lifted up into His presence.

And also he commands now the rams' horns to be blown, to make ready His people for the joyful jubilee. For can we not discern that the work, which is now done in the congregations gathered under the apostles, has especially a diaconal character? Diaconal, so can we perhaps say, are our services in the outer court. The deacons should now more than formerly do their work among the flocks, that the sealed members may be able to fulfil in spirit and truth the service on the brazen altar, presenting their *bodies* a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. Diaconal is the work of the evangelists, wearing like the deacons the red stole, the emblem of the blood of sprinkling, purging our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Diaconal is also in a certain manner the work of the arch-angels in the present time ; for they come to the angels of the churches as elder brethren (as deacons visit in the flock), bringing comfort and light into the spiritual families, the several congregations in the tribes and lands of Christendom, that they may understand and fulfil the practical duties that the Lord now lays upon us. I repeat, dear brethren : our *practical* duties. For not by speculating or finding out systems and theories concerning the going on of the Lord's work, but by *weeping* and *praying* we shall be prepared for the next step towards the blessed jubilee. If there is joy in heaven over *one* sinner

that repenteth, how great shall be then the joy, when the whole company of the sealed first-fruits with *one* accord seeks the face of the Lord, weeping and praying—*weeping* in true repentance—because of all their sins, the known and unknown ; weeping bitterly, as Peter did when the Lord looked upon him with an eye of unspeakable love, and *praying*, praying for the Lord's grace and mercy in perfect faith and joyful confidence, praying from the depths of our hearts : “Hasten, O God, the time when Thou shalt send from Thy right hand Him whom we love, for whom we long, for whom we wait more than they that watch for the morning.”

Then, as we hope, an answer shall come to us from heaven, an answer in peace, yea, finally shall the trumpet sound, and the Lord will appear to lead His people into the everlasting rest of the acceptable year of the jubilee. Amen.







W. H. W. W.  
June 1, 1902.  
A SERMON.  
*Shut the Doors.*

*"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee ; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.—ISAIAH xxvi. 20.*

THIS passage is sometimes quoted as referring to the standing of the 144,000 upon Mount Zion. It is however difficult to see how it ever could apply to that event. For if the 144,000 shall find themselves in a place of safety from the persecution of Antichrist, this shall surely not be by any act of their own, but by the act of God. Yet here Isaiah calls upon the people of God to do an act themselves : Come—enter into thy chambers ; mark, *thy* chambers, an expression which seems altogether inadequate for Mount Zion, God's own chosen dwelling place. The difference comes out forcibly if we compare our text with Ps. xxvii. 5, where David sings : "In the time of trouble *the Lord* shall hide me in *His* pavilion ; in the secret of *His* Tabernacle shall *He* hide me ; *He* shall set me upon a rock." This would seem the very opposite of Isaiah's injunction : "Come, my people, enter

*thou* into *thy* chambers, and shut *thy* doors about thee." Let us give heed to the plural form; thy doors, thy chambers, obviously pointing not to one Divine refuge, but to several human habitations, each family or congregation by itself, analogous to the night of passover in Egypt, when each Jewish family had to remain within its own house, marked with the blood of the passover lamb. "None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning" (Exod. xii. 22). Let us further observe how Isaiah bids them shut their doors: it is not the act of Him Who has the key of David, Who opens and no man shuts, Who shuts and no man opens, but their own act, quite different from what happened to Noah, when Jehovah Himself shut in the ark all who were to be saved from the deluge. Further, Isaiah says: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, which hardly can be brought into accordance with the hope of the 144,000 to stand with the Lamb, not for a little moment, but for ever, and who, far from hiding themselves, shall be made manifest as saviours upon Mount Zion, to the comforting and strengthening of those who are left behind. They who say they are Jews shall come and worship before the feet of Philadelphia, beholding how the Lord has loved it.

There is a very marked contrast between the beginning and the close of the 26th chapter of Isaiah, from which our text is taken. In the former part the song is heard: we have a strong city, God

will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks. This refers obviously to a time of deliverance and lifting up. Those who sing thus are bidden, "*Open* ye the gates, that the righteous nation may enter in;" for those who experience such mighty help and love of God, shall not keep it to themselves, not shut their doors, but rather urge others to come and partake of God's mercy freely offered to all. Whereas the hiding in one's own chamber with closed doors, points to a time of humiliation of such as are ashamed of their own poverty and nakedness.

Before examining which application our text may have for us, let us first endeavour to apprehend what Isaiah intended to convey to his contemporaries.

The prophet's spirit was intent upon the glorious future to which Israel was called under the king, who like a branch was to come forth out of the root of Jesse. But he also clearly saw the manifold dangers threatening from the surrounding heathen nations, and especially from Egypt in the South, and Assyria in the North, both striving for the mastery of the world. On this head, however, Isaiah was set at rest by the revelations granted unto him concerning God's judgments upon all those nations. But the greatest hindrance to the fulfilment of God's gracious purpose was the spiritual decline of Judah. Here was the true cause of the trying disappointments of which Isaiah's life was so full. At first the

reign of Uzziah seemed to promise well for the speedy establishment of the kingdom which the prophet saw in vision and for the realization of which he longed with all the fervour of a true Israelite. But elated by great prosperity Uzziah at the close of his reign imagined himself to be such a favourite of Jehovah, that he might grasp also priestly power unto himself. For this sin he was struck with leprosy. His son and successor never entered the temple. Thus Isaiah saw his hope deferred. Still more when King Ahaz introduced all kinds of idolatry in Jerusalem. But Isaiah's expectations were again quickened under the pious reign of Hezekiah, who cleansed the temple, and nobly exerted himself for the conversion of the ten tribes, that the passover might be celebrated according to God's will in the unity of the twelve-fold covenanted people. Isaiah witnessed how in answer to Hezekiah's prayer the Assyrians were driven back from besieging Jerusalem. Yet new disappointment came, when King Manasseh again filled Jerusalem with abominations. At last Isaiah became convinced that he should not in his lifetime behold the kingdom for which he so long had hoped and waited. And it was revealed unto him how even the promised Redeemer, the chosen servant of Jehovah, should have to pass through many sufferings before attaining to glory. There is in this respect some analogy between Isaiah and St. Paul, who both in their later years had to give up the



hope of beholding in this body the coming of the Lord, both having arrived at the conviction that the way into the kingdom leads through much tribulation.

This change of spiritual perspective gave to the latter part of Isaiah's prophecies a stamp so different, that many theologians speak of two different authors. The chapter from which our text is taken was written at the end of Isaiah's first period. It reflects as in a mirror how his spirit was balancing between hope and resignation. The chapter opens with a vision of Jerusalem's glory after the laying low of its adversaries. Isaiah gives expression to his innermost longing: "With my soul have I desired Thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early." But he observes how distant still is the fulfilment of his hope. God's chosen people has not answered its high calling. "We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen." Death has swept away those who like Hezekiah with all their heart had sought to clear the way for the kingdom of God. Isaiah no longer expects deliverance through any man living. Through inspiration he sees the resurrection morning: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." Then follows our text, not as part of the prophecy, but as the inference which the prophet draws from it. He turns from

the idealistic standpoint to the realistic—from vision to exhortation. Looking no longer to the future, but to the present low estate of Israel, he says: Come, my people, instead of speculating upon ways of escape, instead of dreaming of glory, for which thou art not yet prepared, rather hide thyself in thy chambers with closed doors to give thyself to meditation and prayer, in order that God's indignation may not smite thee, but that thy part may be with those who shall awake out of the dust with songs of triumph.

Such is the immediate meaning, which may help us to some application unto ourselves. We do not presume to make guesses whether our text may not point also to the next phase of the Lord's work, when the children of God may be bidden to hide themselves at the archangels' seats, which, as far as we know, shall be like cities of refuge in all the tribes. We rather restrict ourselves to the application to our present condition. Like Isaiah's, so our expectations have failed. Those through whom we had hoped to be led on unto perfection have been removed by death without our having reached the goal. At first we supposed it was merely a testing of our faith, which could not last but for a little moment. We presumed to be ripe first-fruits. We assumed that our having accepted the Lord's apostles had given us such superiority over the mass of the baptized, that at any moment the Lord could admit us into His bodily presence upon Mount Zion and

make manifest unto all, that we were His beloved children in whom He was well pleased. But the prolongation of our bereavement shook this our false assurance. Slowly it began to dawn upon us that God's unexpected act in taking from our midst the last living apostle had a far deeper meaning. In the awful silence we began to discern the voice of God, speaking unto us : Come, My people !—oh, the tender mercy and long-suffering of God, not yet rejecting us, but still addressing us as *His* people—Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee : hide thyself as it were a little moment until the indignation be overpast. Do no longer put up yourselves as the anointed of the Lord, but rather hide yourselves, ashamed at having failed to manifest the power of the anointing. Do no longer sound the trumpet to proclaim aloud how your Lord, restoring apostles and prophets, has set before you an open door into the kingdom of heaven, but withdraw into your chambers in silence, examining whether your public testimony was not often mixed with the alloy of sectarian boasting (Job xxxi. 34). Do no longer open your door to the traveller (Job xxxi. 32), but shut your doors about you, hiding your shame on account of the incense no longer ascending. Come together with closed doors, in silent searching of your own hearts, whether our former services of intercession were not often an empty ceremony. Did we indeed take part in our High Priest's heartfelt grief over His backsliding

people? Were our hearts indeed filled with His sorrowing love as with burning coals which made the incense go up like a cloud penetrating into the most holy place? Were our supplications not often a mere form of words? Were our hearts enlarged, in true catholicity expanding towards all our brethren?

After our blessed Saviour's death His disciples met with closed doors for fear of the Jews. What could they answer when questioned? they were overwhelmed with grief not merely on account of the loss of their Master, but surely not less on account of their having added to His sufferings and agony by forsaking Him, caring most for their own safety. Would not the Jews taunt: if ye believed in Jesus, why did you not show your faith by your works? Therefore they preferred to be alone, hiding their shame. Unto those who verily afflict their souls in contrite acknowledgment of their sins, the hiding need be no longer than for a little moment. Unto such, the Risen Lord will appear in spite of closed doors, and speak His comforting salutation of peace.

Shut thy doors about thee. It is not merely external seclusion. It points to spiritual retirement in order to be alone with God, allowing the search light of the Holy Spirit to expose the hidden stains which defile our baptismal garment. Shut the doors of your eyes, not to be distracted by outward things, that ye may devote yourselves

to undisturbed introspection. Shut the doors of your ears, not to be troubled by the manifold voices of this earth. Above all shut the doors of your mouths, that the multitude of your own words do not hinder you from hearing Him Who in silence and secrecy would speak to you words of fatherly chastening, that He may thus prepare you for His cleansing word of absolution.

By the removal of His last apostle, the Lord has brought us face to face with death. We were inclined to take a one-sided view of everlasting life—to speak too boldly about resurrection, and change, as if we were already fit for it. But the Lord brings home to us, that we have to look for the resurrection *from the dead*. There is no way to resurrection glory except through death. For even those who shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, must first pass through the spiritual death of their own selves. If we would escape those imminent judgments, whereby all that which stands in the way to God's kingdom shall be brought to death, then we must avail ourselves of this last half hour of our God's long suffering, to yield up ourselves a full and perfect burnt-offering unto God. We must allow our life-blood to be poured out at the foot of God's altar. We may not shrink from being slain and cut to pieces that all flesh in us may be consumed, that our Lord may at last see the desires of His heart fulfilled, even to wave before His Father a handful of first-fruits, green ears of corn,



beaten—mark, *beaten* out of full ears, and *dried by the fire* (Lev. ii. 14 ; the revised version has : *bruised* corn, *parched* with fire).—Except the alabaster box be broken the precious ointment cannot be poured out to the glory of Jesus our Lord, nor can its odour fill the house. Except we yield up ourselves to be broken the Holy Ghost is straitened and hindered. The broken spirit and the broken heart are the sacrifices acceptable to God. Only when we are willing absolutely to die unto ourselves, to be made nothing, only then can the power of the anointing find room to manifest in us the life of Christ. Only then can the accuser find nothing in us. Only then can the Lord use us as saviours upon Mount Zion.

These 70 years has the Lord been striving to sanctify a first-fruit for the sanctification of the harvest. For if the first-fruit is holy, the whole lump is also holy. Our slowness of heart has delayed the sanctification of the whole church. Therefore has the voice of the Lord now spoken unto us : Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee. In the silence of thy retirement ponder : who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord ? or who shall stand in His holy place ? he that has clean hands and a pure heart : who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully ; in other words, who has indeed kept his baptismal vows. Those who thus in spirit and in truth enter into their chambers, hiding

themselves on account of their utter unworthiness, yet out of the depths crying unto Him with Whom is forgiveness and plenteous redemption, they shall be comforted when suddenly the silence shall be broken by the jubilant cry : Lift up your heads, O ye gates ! and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ! and the King of glory shall come in. Amen.



*1869*  
*4th after Pentecost June 15/402*  
A HOMILY.  
*That Which Was Lost*

I PETER V. 5-11 ; LUKE XV. 1-10.

WHAT depth of grief is often expressed in the little words, loss, lost! At the tombs of our beloved we mourn their loss. From all sides we hear plaintive voices of men bewailing, one the loss of his fortune, another the loss of his health, the loss of his physical or intellectual powers, etc. To the man of order, the loss even of a trifling thing is unbearable. However small its value may be, he must find it ; it cannot be lost. In its disappearance he hears, as it were, a voice accusing him of not having taken due care.

And if we turn to a higher platform, what a world of misery, how many centuries of suffering and agony are comprehended in the expressions : paradise lost ; innocence lost ; access to the tree of life lost ; daily intercourse with God, such as it was in Eden, lost.

Therefore those who do not merely vegetate but live indeed have a fountain of daily comfort in the Divine Gospel of the Son of Man, Who is come to seek and save that which was lost (Luke xix. 10).

The thought of losing anything is unbearable to the Creator of all, not only because He is a God of order, but much more because He is Love.

The drift of the two parables in this day's gospel, and of the third which in Luke's record follows immediately after, is : the recovery of that which is lost. Under the image of the Shepherd going after the lost sheep, we recognize our blessed Saviour, *the Incarnate Son*. In the woman, seeking the one lost piece of silver, we see the loving operation of *the Holy Spirit*, stirring the Church not to be satisfied with the nine pieces left, but to seek diligently—mark, *diligently*—the lost tenth, to give herself no rest until she be “filled with all the fulness of God” (Ephes. iii. 19). And the parable of the prodigal son points to the invisible yet mighty drawings of *the Father* (John vi. 44), whereby so often a lost son, after long kicking against the pricks, is at last compelled to return in penitence to the Father's house, there to taste the long despised, yet not exhausted, loving-kindness of his Father.

The first parable of our gospel points to the owner of sheep. There would seem to be no occupation so favourite with God, so suggestive of Divine truths, as that of shepherd. Amongst all the types and images in holy scripture not one is so repeatedly used. “Abel was a keeper of sheep, but”—mark, “*but*—Cain was a tiller of the ground” (Gen. iv. 2); thus the inspired record marks the chosen one of the two first-born men. The patriarchs



were all shepherds, and their being so secured unto them their separateness in Goshen, for "every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians" (Gen. xlvii. 3), even as in the spiritual the minister of the Good Shepherd is objectionable to those who live after the flesh, like David's brethren who taunted him: "Why didst thou not remain with thy sheep and leave to us this business of settling with Goliath?" (1 Sam. xvii. 28).

Moses had to leave Pharaoh's palace, and to be trained during 40 years as shepherd, before he was called to be the leader of the covenanted people. Likewise was David taken from the sheepfolds.

May not the reason of all this be, that hardly any other vocation requires and developes so much endurance, so much meekness, so much patience, so much watchfulness, so much self-sacrifice. In his self-defence against Laban, Jacob depicts the oriental shepherd's life: "in the day the drought consumed me and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes" (Gen. xxxi. 40). David showed another side, when relating to Saul how a lion and a bear took a lamb of his flock, but how he fearlessly delivered the lamb out of the very mouth of the fierce aggressors. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep. Though such experiences are alien to shepherds in our parts, yet even here we may see how trying is the character of helpless sheep, which, meeting a danger, for instance a carriage, run about mostly just in front of the horses. No

application of strength or authority can avail. The only way for the shepherd is gently and meekly to quiet the silly and obstinate sheep, patiently endeavouring to lead them in safety. Therefore, it had such deep meaning when our Risen Lord repeatedly enjoined impetuous Peter to feed His lambs, to tend His sheep.

Dear brethen! such sheep are we. By our silliness, by our slowness of apprehension, by our obstinacy, we continually try to the utmost the patience of the Good Shepherd. And how often are we lost by our self-willedness. We may go on for a long time, quite content with ourselves, "feeding ourselves without fear" (Jude xii.) on self-chosen moors, altogether unconscious of our drifting always further away from the Shepherd's fold, unconscious of His unwearied searching after us. Let us remember Peter, so assured of his devotion to the Lord, that he slighted the solemn warnings of his Master. I deny Thee? impossible. Though all should be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended. I am ready to go with Thee both into prison and into death. To prove it, Peter followed Jesus into the hall of the High Priest. There he was witness of the powers of darkness let loose against the Shepherd. Fear crept into the heart of the else undaunted Peter. Suddenly he saw his Master from the midst of His torturers looking towards him—oh! a look of sorrowing love and tender reproach which made Peter conscious of

actually having denied his Master thrice. Yea, Peter was made conscious of being himself a lost sheep. He went out and wept bitterly.

Jesus Christ is now looking from heaven upon His baptized, erring like lost sheep. His heart yearns over them, as the Holy Ghost continually testifies in our midst. He would fain come to their help through those whom *unto this end* He has made partakers of His priestly anointing.

He looks from heaven upon the company of His sealed. He misses many, some are unfaithful, others are lapsed. One of His foremost cares in this time of silence is that those lost sheep should be brought back. He Who after the feeding of the multitude commanded the fragments to be gathered, in order "*that nothing be lost*" (John vi. 12), He cannot endure the thought that any of His sealed children should be lost. The intensity of His grief sounds in those words of His prayer unto His Father: Those whom Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scriptures may be fulfilled.

Have we entered into His longing desire to recover those lost sheep? Do we wrestle together with Him in prayer without ceasing for the unfaithful and lapsed? or do we imagine this to be exclusively the duty of evangelists and other ministers? Dare we plead not guilty of selfishness, of lukewarmness?

Dearly beloved! ye have heard your Lord's bidding to meet in special services for humiliation.

Have we not apprehended, in that invitation, that our Master is looking upon us as He did upon Peter with a look of sorrowing love and tender reproach? Like Peter, let us go out and weep bitterly. For verily our Lord has something against us. We have not walked worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. We have strayed from our Lord's ways like lost sheep, causing Him much anxiety and grief.

Do we dare to speak of *our* trial? These long and weary months of silence evidently set before us how the Good Shepherd leaving the 99, the mass of the baptised, as yet in the wilderness, is going after us until—ah! *until*—He find us, that upon His shoulders He may bear us unto His dwelling-place, even unto Mount Zion, and that at last the song of joy may sound in heavenly places, joy over the sealed repenting of their manifold shortcomings and turning from their manifold backslidings.

Now unto Him Who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy—to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever (Jude xxiv). Amen.







## THE FEAST OF SHOPHAR.

*Sermon (preached in Albany)  
June, 1903*

**I**N these our days, when so-called higher criticism would make us believe that the old testament does not concern Christian faith, it is expedient even more than formerly to take heed unto the prophetic portions of Scripture as unto a light shining in a dark place. And this regards not only the words spoken by the prophets of old, but also the types, which are like a rich mine, wherein many treasures of Divine revelation are still hidden. We wish to draw your attention to-day to the Mosaic feasts, concerning which Paul wrote, that they are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ (Coloss. ii. 17).

Amongst those feasts there is one of which we rarely hear, yet which would seem to have a special importance for us at this present time. We read in Lev. xxiii. 23-25, "In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work, but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord" (compare Numb. xxix. 1).

Let us observe at once, that it is ordained for the first day of the seventh month. Seven is the mystical number in which the Divine three and the human four are united. It points to the consummation of God's dealings with men. Not human combination or inventiveness, but God Himself marked the seventh day as a holy day. In six days God created heaven and earth, and God rested on the seventh day. It was the seventh day unto God, not unto man : to Adam, who had been created last of all on the sixth day, it was the first day. It was the conclusion of the Creator's work, but to man the beginning of the first week of his life.

This original cyclus of seven days was afterwards enlarged to a cyclus of seven months (of which more presently), further to another cyclus of seven years, the seventh year or sabbath year being ordained as a rest for the land and for the people too ; the fields were not to be tilled nor the vineyards to be pruned (Lev. xxv. 3-7). And then again, after seven sabbath years, in other words, after forty-nine calendar years, came the fiftieth or jubilee year, when all debts were remitted and every Israelite returned into full enjoyment of his privileges (Lev. xxv. 8).

Thus the seventh day, the seventh month, the seventh year and the seven times seventh year were hallowed and in a special way consecrated to sabbatical rest. The seventh day of the week is the basis ; all those other feasts are, as it were, the

superstructure built upon this foundation. To grasp something of the spiritual meaning we must therefore enquire: what is it when God rests from His work?

The Creator rested on the seventh day because He had prepared all things for the blessedness of His creatures; nothing more was to be done; nothing was lacking; all was very good, God's purpose of love was accomplished. Humanly speaking, we might call the work of creation as it were a parenthesis in God's eternal existence; creation accomplished, He returned to His original way of living. Rest is not mere abstention from work, but joy at beholding the work well accomplished. Before the world was, God's daily delight had been with His Eternal Son (Prov. viii. 30), now His daily delight was to be moreover with the children of men, a continual intercourse of love. Each of the six days of creation had presented a change, the gloom of chaos gradually vanishing before the light and cheerfulness and beauty of paradise. But on the seventh day it was all finished; no change was any longer needed. In that garden which God had prepared for him, man might henceforth experience and taste how in his Creator's presence is fulness of joy and at His right hand are pleasures for evermore.

At the close of each period of creation the time is marked. In the six times repeated words—the evening and the morning were the first day (the

second day, etc.)—we see as it were the hands on the Creator's dial indicating the continual change from present to past. But on the seventh day the hands suddenly stop; no mention is any longer made of morning and evening. The seventh day points to unchangeable, everlasting rest, when there shall be time no longer; when He in Whom there is neither yesterday nor to-morrow, even the Eternal, Immut-able God shall be All in all. In New Testament language the fundamental idea of sabbatical rest is expressed in the pregnant words: life everlasting.

Man's sin disturbed this intended rest of the Creator, Who then at once began a new work, even the work of redemption, concerning which our Saviour said: My Father works hitherto and I work (John v. 17).<sup>\*</sup> Then the Sabbath was given to the covenanted people as a memorial of the Creator's original purpose, and as a promise of its future restoration. As the Lord spake through the prophet Ezekiel (xx. 12): I gave them My Sabbaths to be a *sign* between Me and them, that they might know that I am Jehovah Who sanctify them.

Let us just in passing observe how the seventh or sabbath year also reminded Israel of the original condition, when the Creator caused every plant and

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\* This word was spoken to the Jews, who, cleaving to their literal explanation and distortion of the law, sought to slay Jesus because He healed on the Sabbath day. They did not discern that in doing so Jesus was clearing the way for the restoration of God's interrupted rest.



every herb to grow spontaneously (Gen. i. 12, ii. 5), before man had fallen, and in consequence had been sentenced to till the ground in the sweat of his face. God, whose mercy endures for ever, will restore it all. He is preparing His Zion, where He desires to rest for ever, dwelling amongst His redeemed creatures. The year of jubilee shall come, when all debts, all sins shall be blotted out, and all bondage shall be brought to an end. For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Having thus seen how important the number seven is in God's appointment of the special seasons of approaching unto Him, we can easily understand that the seventh month of each year should also be marked. No less than three solemn celebrations were appointed for the seventh month : the memorial of blowing of trumpets on the first, the day of atonement on the tenth day, and on the fifteenth began the feast of tabernacles lasting an octave.\*

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\* If any one should marvel how so many holy days—besides the weekly Sabbaths—could be crowded into one single month, then let him remember that in Palestine the barley harvest began in the first month (Josh. iii. 15, compare with iv. 19). Seven weeks later followed the wheat harvest (Ex. xxxiv. 22, compare with Lev. xxiii. 15). The threshing went on until the vintage (Lev. xxvi. 5). But by the seventh month all the fruit of the land, even from the vineyard, had been gathered in (Lev. xxiii. 39 ; Deut. xvi. 13). Thus it was rather a season of rest before the new sowing began. Moreover, absolute abstention from work was not commanded for all days of celebration. It was only on the

This seventh month, whatever further application it may have, is obviously prophetic of the final period of our present dispensation, of the approaching day of humiliation and confession of all the baptised—of their cleansing by the High-priest of our profession, coming forth from the most Holy place in heaven—and finally, of that true feast of tabernacles, when the millennial kingdom of Christ shall be established, when God manifest in flesh will dwell amongst His redeemed, who have part in the first resurrection.

Here, in passing, a warning may be given against those rash interpreters of words of prophecy, who, whenever mention is made of the seventh month, at once jump at the conclusion that our calendar month of July is indicated. The seventh month in general, and the various dates of it, are prophetic intimations which are not of private interpretation. Our earthly arithmetic is of no avail here.

The seventh month, so full of blessings, was ushered in by the memorial of blowing of trumpets. To get at the meaning of this blowing, we must first enquire which trumpets were used. For the English Bible versions—both the authorised and the

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weekly Sabbath, and on the great day of atonement, that no work whatever was allowed, not even the kindling of a fire (Ex. xxxv. 3 ; Lev. xxiii. 30). On other feast days only "servile work" was forbidden (Lev. xxiii. 7, 8, 21, 25, 35, 36), namely, labour in the field or in the workshop, but preparation of food was permitted (Ex. xii. 16, compare with Lev. xxiii. 7).

revised—use almost constantly the same word trumpet for two altogether different instruments, which the original Hebrew (and many foreign Bible versions) clearly distinguish, namely the trumpet (Heb., *chatsotserah*) which was made of silver, and the horn or cornet (Heb., *shophar*), which was made of ram's horn.\*

God commanded Moses to make two silver trumpets (*chatsotseroth*) destined to a threefold use. First as a signal to the several camps of Israel to gather for an assembly or for the marching onward (Numb. x. 2). This of course ceased when, after the conquest of the promised land, the tribes were no longer encamped all around the tabernacle in the wilderness, but spread all over the surface of Palestine.

\* *Chatsotserah* in the following passages :—Numb. x. 2, 8, 9, 10 ; 2 Kings xi. 14, xii. 13 ; 1 Chron. xv. 24, 28, xvi. 6, 42 ; 2 Chron. v. 12, 13, xiii. 12, 14, xx. 28, xxiii. 13, xxix. 26, 27, 28 ; Ezra iii. 10 ; Neh. xii. 35, 41 ; Ps. xcvi. 6 ; Hos. v. 8.

*Shophar* in the following passages :—Exod. xix. 16, 19 ; xx. 18 ; Lev. xxv. 9 ; Josh. vi. 4, 5, 8, 9, 13, 16, 20 ; Judg. iii. 27 ; vi. 34, vii. 8, 16, 18, 19, 20 ; 1 Sam. xiii. 3 ; 2 Sam. ii. 28 ; vi. 15 ; xv. 10 ; xviii. 16 ; xx. 1, 22 ; 1 Kings i. 34, 39, 41 ; 2 Kings ix. 13 ; 1 Chron. xv. 28 ; 2 Chron. xv. 14 ; Neh. iv. 18, 20 ; Job xxxix. 24, 25 ; Ps. xlvii. 5 ; Ps. lxxxi. 3 ; Ps. xcvi. 6 ; Ps. cl. 3 ; Isa. xviii. 3 ; xxvii. 13 ; lviii. 1 ; Jer. iv. 5, 19, 21 ; vi. 1, 17 ; xlii. 14 ; li. 27 ; Ezek. xxxiii. 3, 4, 5, 6 ; Hos. v. 8 ; viii. 1 ; Joel ii. 1, 15 ; Amos ii. 2, iii. 6 ; Zeph. i. 16 ; Zech. ix. 14.

The Hebrew has a third word, *keren*, which would seem to be rather a generic term like horn ; in Josh. vi. we find *keren jobel*, ram's horn, repeatedly used interchangeably or in connection with *shophar*.

The second object was expressed thus : “ If you go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresses you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the (silver) trumpets and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God and ye shall be saved from your enemies ” (Numb. x. 9). Evidently this blowing of the silver trumpets was not primarily for military signals, but rather an appeal to God, that He might remember His people and come to their help. Therefore none but the priests were allowed to blow them (*v.* 8). Such use of the silver trumpets is mentioned several times in the later history of Israel, a memorable instance being when Abijah, king of Judah, with his army stood arrayed in battle against the twice superior forces of Jeroboam, king of Israel. Before the battle, Abijah addressed his enemies, reminding them how they had forsaken the temple and its holy ordinances, unto which Judah was faithful, and he added : “ Behold, God Himself is with us for our Captain, and His priests with sounding trumpets (*chatsotseroth*) to cry alarm against you ” (2 Chron. xiii. 12).

Then there was a third use of the silver trumpets, which God commanded unto Moses : “ In the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginning of your months, ye shall blow with the (silver) trumpets over your burnt-offerings and over the sacrifice of your peace-offerings, that they may be for a memorial ” (Numb. x. 10). Here we see how, already in the wilderness, music was ordained

by God as one of the chief helps to worship. Later, David developed it, ordering choral and instrumental bands for the services. Both before the ark in the tent on Mount Zion, and with the brazen altar in the tabernacle at Gibeon, the silver trumpets are expressly mentioned (1 Chron. xvi. 4-6 and 39-42). At the consecration of Solomon's temple a hundred and twenty priests with trumpets are recorded as taking their part in the service of praise and thanksgiving (2 Chron. v. 12). Again, at the great revival in the days of king Hezekiah, it is explicitly recorded that "the Levites stood with the instruments of David and the priests with the trumpets" (2 Chron. xxix. 26-28).

This cursory review might be much extended, but it is sufficient to prove how the silver trumpets (*chatsotseroth*) were used in priestly services of praise and worship. Altogether different was the meaning of the cornet (*shophar*). *Whereas the former was directed from man to God, the latter symbolised the voice of God speaking unto men.*

The first time where we find the *shophar* mentioned is when Jehovah came down upon Mount Sinai: "There were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the *shophar* exceedingly loud" (Ex. xix. 16, 19, xx. 18). Now let us remember that no man was upon Mount Sinai, with the single exception of Moses, who certainly had not taken any musical instrument with him. No mortal being produced that voice of the



shophar, which heralded the personal presence of Jehovah and caused all the people to tremble. That sound of the shophar was supernatural, just as the thunders and lightnings were. Thus the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (xii. 19) mentions "the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words," as together manifesting the personal presence of God, and thereby filling Israel with fear and awe (comp. Deut. iv. 12, 33, v. 24, 26).

The difference between the silver trumpet and the shophar comes out very clearly where both are mentioned together. We all remember how David's first endeavour to bring up the ark of the covenant to Mount Zion failed. It is remarkable that sacred Scripture gives a detailed enumeration of the instruments of music used by David on both occasions. At the first the shophar was missing, but at the second it is explicitly recorded, both in the book of Samuel and in that of the Chronicles, that David brought up the ark of the Lord with the sound of the shophar (2 Sam. vi. 5, 15; 1 Chron. xiii. 8, xv. 28). David had not omitted anything which human piety could devise, yet he failed until the voice of Jehovah sounded. Another striking instance is to be found at the solemn renewing of the covenant under Asa, king of Judah: "They entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul. . . . And they sware unto the Lord God with a loud voice and with shouting and with trumpets (chatsotseroth)

and with cornets (shopharoth) (2 Chron. xv. 14). The latter symbolised God's response, God's acceptance of the vows made by the people.

Thus, in the days of the captivity, Zechariah (ix. 14) prophesied concerning the restoration of Israel: "The Lord shall be seen over them, and His arrow shall go forth as the lightning, and the Lord God shall blow the shophar."

We have gone into these details in order to come to a right understanding of the feast of blowing of trumpets, or as a literal rendering should be, the memorial of sound. For neither the silver trumpet nor the shophar is named in the original. But we have many indications from which to gather that on the first day of the seventh month the shophar was sounded. Such is also the uncontested tradition of the Jews, who until this day observe a special service of the shophar, which they add to their celebrations of New Year (in our calendar month of September). They sing then the 81st Psalm: Blow up the shophar in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.\* In some countries even now, a ram's horn is blown in the synagogue on that day. But even where this is omitted repeated reference is made to the awe inspiring sound of the shophar, which, like a

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\* On every feast of the new moon the silver trumpets (chatsotseroth) were blown (Numb. x. 9), but on the new moon of the seventh month, as we see from Psalm lxxxi., also the shophar sounded.

prophet's voice, calls to return unto Jehovah. As a proof how even modern Jews apprehend the prophetic meaning of this feast, we may be allowed to quote the following words from a Jewish prayer book : "Woe to us if our soul be not purged by repentance, when in the day of the resurrection the shophar shall sound." \*

In the days of old, on the feast of the new moon in the seventh month, the shophar sounded through all the holy land, reminding the people how the voice of Jehovah had been heard from Mount Sinai. The shophar quickened in them the consciousness of being God's chosen people, and at the same time of their shortcomings and failures in keeping the holy covenant. Thus they were prepared in truth and in spirit to afflict their souls on the great day of atonement, which was to follow nine days later, that, purged and cleansed, they might celebrate the joyful feast of tabernacles on the fifteenth day of the same month.

These were shadows of things to come ; the

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\* Prières d'un cœur Israélite. Livre d'offices et recueil de prières et de méditations. Paris, 1848, p. 175.

*See* Remarkable is also in Milton's "Paradise Lost," canto XI :—

Let us call to synod all the bless'd  
Through heav'n's wide bounds ; from them I will not hide  
My judgments. . . . .

He ended, and the Son gave signal high  
To the bright minister that watch'd ; he blew  
His trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps  
When God descended, and perhaps once more  
To sound at general doom. The angelic blast  
Fill'd all the regions.

reality shall be seen in the church of Christ. The seventh month—in other words, the time of God's winding up with His church—shall be ushered in by a blowing of trumpets, by a solemn sounding of the sevenfold shophar.

When reading in the Apocalypse concerning the seven angels who stand before God and are to be sent forth to sound the seven trumpets,<sup>1</sup> we usually think of a final evangelist ministry. We do not presume to deny that evangelists may have some part in this future blowing of the seven trumpets. But surely that cannot be all, nor even the main thing. The blowing of those seven trumpets is to be a Divine act beyond any evangelist work hitherto seen. It shall be a manifestation of the presence of God and of His power, as yet unknown. For even before the seven trumpets begin to sound, when the angel casts the coals of fire from the golden altar upon the earth (Apoc. viii. 5), there shall be "voices and thunderings and lightnings" like as on Sinai, and like as round the throne of God in the Apocalypse (iv. 5).

The procession of the seven trumpeting priests before the ark round the walls of Jericho is generally accepted as a type of the seven apocalyptic angels with their trumpets. Now let us observe, that the Jewish hosts before and behind the ark walked silently during six days. Joshua commanded: "Ye shall not shout nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word

proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout" (Josh. vi. 10). This certainly does not suggest any evangelist witness. Only on the sixth day, after six equally silent rounds, at the seventh the people were to shout, and thereupon the walls of Jericho fell. Maybe that has some analogy with the shout of which Paul speaks (1 Thess. iv. 16) in connection with the trump of God.\* But what is then the meaning of the seven priests, sounding their ram's horns? They do not sound the silver trumpets for ordering the march, neither war trumpets, but the shophar, and moreover, before the ark of the covenant, which was the symbol and pledge of Jehovah's presence in the midst of His people. Does not this suggest that the sounding of the seven apocalyptic angels shall not—at least not primarily—be an evangelist witness to the adversaries, but rather a sevenfold manifestation, maybe proclamation of the presence of God?

In order to comfort and strengthen Moses "the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with Moses upon the mountain, and the Lord proclaimed the Name of the Lord" (Exod. xxxiv. 5). May there not be in store for us another Divine proclamation, this time not mainly of God's mercy, as then to Moses, but rather of God's power and majesty? And we are led to hope and expect that, hearing

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\* According to 1 Cor. xv. 52, "the last trump," which, compared to Apoc. x. 7, and xi. 15, would appear to indicate the sounding by the seventh angel.

such voice of God in the midst of the crumbling of political and ecclesiastical institutions in Christendom (each trumpet being followed by judgments), many shall be convicted and converted, who now kick against the pricks, but whom the Lord already knows as future heroes of faith.

The coming of our Lord will be in successive steps. We have to expect "the sign of the Son of Man in heaven," which our Lord Himself mentioned as preceding His personal appearing, and which He connected with "the sending of His angels with a great sound of a trumpet to gather His elect from the four winds" (Matt. xxiv. 31), even those winds which hitherto have been held back (Apoc. vii. 1).

Following upon the silence in heaven, this sudden sounding of God's shophar will be all the more impressive. The protracted hiding of the Lord's power has emboldened many to deny the possibility of miracles, yea, even the very existence of an Almighty God. But suddenly there shall be an overwhelming manifestation of God's irresistible power. "Blow the shophar in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord comes, for it is nigh at hand, . . . sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly" (Joel ii. 1, 15). It is the blowing of the shophar ushering in the seventh month, preparing for the coming day of atonement, when a multitude of bishops, clergy and people, who as yet stand aloof, shall weep between the porch and the



altar, and cry: Spare Thy people, O Lord! and give not Thine heritage to reproach.

So long all human efforts, even of the most faithful ministers, have failed, but then God Himself will speak, God Himself will act.

The 29th Psalm may give us some intimation of that which then shall be witnessed: "The voice of Jehovah is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders; Jehovah is upon many waters. The voice of Jehovah is powerful; the voice of Jehovah is full of majesty. The voice of Jehovah breaks the cedars, yea, Jehovah breaks the cedars of Lebanon." All who are exalted in church and state shall break down at that mighty sound of the spiritual shophar, and shall be made conscious of their utter unworthiness. The voice of Jehovah shall scatter the proud in the imaginations of their heart, and send terror into the hearts of His enemies. But in His temple shall every one speak of His glory. All who really dwell under the shadow of His cherubim, shall praise Him for such overwhelming manifestation of His power and of His mercy.

Yea, mercy; for it shall not yet be the day of His final judgment. As said before, it shall be the Divine call to all the baptised to afflict their souls on that great day of atonement, which shall follow soon after. Christendom shall be brought to cry unto the Lord out of the depths, and He will redeem Israel from all its iniquities. Like as Job, with

whom none of his comforters, not even Elihu prevailed, but who was convicted of his own vileness, when the Lord Himself spake unto him out of the whirlwind, so shall the Christian church in all its divisions, by the sound of the shophar of God, be brought to confess: "I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye sees Thee,\* wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Then shall be witnessed the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy (iv. 5); at the blowing of the shophar in the land, many shall assemble and "go to the defended cities," which we suppose to mean those churches which have been indicated as archangels' seats.

"God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a shophar," says the Psalmist (xlvii. 5). In like manner will the Lord descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God (1 Thess. iv. 16). It can hardly be supposed that the apostle Paul should have used these three expressions for the self-same thing. We rather think that he intimates three successive warnings:—first, "the shout"; the word in the original† means command, also the signal to start given by

\* The Lord did not appear visibly to Job, but hearing His voice Job became so fully conscious of the personal presence of the Lord, that he saw Him with the eye of the spirit.

† The word *κελευσμα* appears only once in the New Testament and likewise only once in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament: Prov. xxx. 27.

the captain of the rowers (κελευστής); then, "the voice of the archangel," which would seem to point to a ministration by the seventy; and finally, "the trump of God," which, in analogy to what old testament history teaches us, suggests the thought of a shophar or sound not produced by any human instrumentality but proceeding immediately from God. As Joel says, The Lord shall utter His voice before His army (ii. 11); He shall roar out of Zion and utter His voice from Jerusalem (iii. 16).

God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in the old dispensation through prophets, and since the ascension of our blessed Saviour through apostles, will once more, in these last days, speak by His Son.

Does such expectation appear to be unspiritual? to be based upon an exaggerated clinging to the letter of some scripture passages?

Let us remember how our blessed Lord, on the eve of His passion, cried, Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father! save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father! glorify Thy Name. Then came there a *voice from heaven*, saying: I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again (John xii. 28). Mark! a *voice from heaven*. And this was not an inner voice heard in the spirit merely, for the evangelist records explicitly: the people that stood by heard it, and said that it thundered; others said that an angel spake to Him. Thus, just before the final act of

the work of atonement, the voice of God sounded audibly in men's ears. In like manner, just before the final act of the church's redemption, even before the first resurrection, shall the voice of God sound in the ears of Christendom.

The typical feast of blowing the shophar shall have its accomplishment when the true Moses shall speak : Give ear, O ye heavens ! and I will speak ; and hear, O earth ! the words of my mouth (Deut. xxxii. 1). Then shall be fulfilled in its fullest meaning : If they escaped not who refused Him Who spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him Who speaks from heaven (Heb. xii. 25).

For verily, like the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos, so shall Christendom hear behind them a great voice as of a shophar. Blessed all those who then like John turn to see the voice that speaks unto them (Apoc. i. 12). Blessed all those who to the shophar of God shall respond with the silver trumpet of thankful love and adoration. Blessed all those who to the mighty voice sounding out of the heavenly sanctuary : Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth, shall give the response which the Holy Ghost laid upon the lips of the children in Jerusalem : Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord ! Hosanna in the highest.



## SERMON.

*Good Friday, April 21st, 1905.*

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ANOTHER year has passed, and again we stand before the Cross. Once more we have approached to the meditation of those mighty acts whereby God has given us life and immortality. Perhaps we had hoped that ere another Good Friday should come round we might keep it after a different sort ; might cast ourselves down in the presence of the Crucified One, not in spirit only, but in very fact ; might see His hands and feet, might look upon His face, and hear His voice. It was right so to hope. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope, as the epistle for the day exhorts. Let us not be ashamed ; let us not grow weary. We are at least one year nearer to the fulfilment of our desire. But standing before the Cross, let us learn the lesson of patience ; let us learn to say from the heart, not our will but Thine be done.

Yet it is with special reference to the fulfilment of our hope, with the thought burning in our hearts, To-day it may come, to-morrow we may see Him, that we would now meditate the Passion of our Lord



and Saviour, to draw water from this ever-springing well for the refreshment of our souls. The thought of standing in the presence of the Lord has become familiar. Many of us have rejoiced in it from infancy ; all of us have embraced it for many years. But let us be on our guard, lest familiarity have its proverbial effect ; lest for one moment we permit ourselves to think of entering His presence lightly ; or for a moment forget the one thing that makes it possible. The epistle for the day speaks of that spiritual access into the holiest of all which we now enjoy. What gives us boldness for this ? It is, he says, the blood of Jesus. And what else than His blood can embolden us for meeting Him face to face, that we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him ? Shall we say our baptism ? Yes, indeed ; but have we always abode in the grace thereof, have we watched and kept our garments ? Shall we say the sealing ? Ah ! but which of us will dare to affirm that the seal of God's grace has always been preserved inviolate ? Will any of us who have been ordained to the ministry presume to stand before the Son of Man on the strength of his office ? Alas, who among us needs not to confess that his ministry has been polluted, his priesthood profaned ? Thus do our very prerogatives become our reproach, and each heavenly gift that we have abused sends us back in shame, but also (God grant it), in penitence, to the Cross, that our hearts may be sprinkled from an evil conscience.

This is a faithful saying, writes St. Paul, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom, he adds, I am chief. The apostle who could testify that he had laboured more abundantly than all, takes his stand not upon his attainments nor his work, but upon God's mercy. And of this mercy Christ's death is the ground and the pledge. There is no truth of the gospel more elementary than this, yet none that needs to be contended for more earnestly. That Christ came to save may be generally accepted. That He came to save sinners is admitted with a little reserve as to the meaning of the term. That He laid down His life for us is not denied, but in what sense is questioned. That His death was a propitiatory sacrifice for sin—the sole and indispensable condition of any mercy or favour of God towards men, this most necessary truth is dimly apprehended, feebly asserted, boldly denied.

Within the memory of most here present there has been a sad change for the worse in this regard. Time was when evangelists had often to remind their hearers that the forgiveness of sins is not the whole of the gospel, that to preach Christ crucified, and not to preach Christ risen and ascended, is to deal partially with the word. It was seldom necessary, at least in this land, to defend or insist on the fact of the Atonement. False theories about the fact there might be, but the fact itself was seldom disputed. It is otherwise now. The heresies of those who

even deny the Lord that bought them are no longer brought in privily, as St. Peter says, but are published in every magazine, and the way of truth is indeed evil spoken of. What shall be our defence, and the defence of those entrusted to our care, against the poison that infects the spiritual atmosphere? Arguments will not suffice, theology alone will not prevail. There must be in us, on the one hand, that consciousness of sin that makes us cry sincerely, God be merciful to me, a sinner; and on the other, that faith in what we celebrate this day, which can joyfully reply, I believe in the forgiveness of sins. May the Holy Ghost ever quicken in us all such apprehension and such faith.

To this end let us consider for a few moments what we mean by sin, what God teaches us about it, and our own experience confirms. Too often in the arrogant philosophy of the day we find sin contemplated as a mere imperfection, an evidence that man is a creature as yet only in the early stages of his evolution. Let ages of time be allowed for his development, let the processes of education be wisely and sedulously followed, then it is dreamed that sin will be cultivated out of existence, and a race of men be bred free from the unavoidable defects of immaturity, without flaw, and perfect. In such impious theories defilement is a mere figure of speech, and guilt a term that has no meaning. How they that hold such theories can at the same time profess to hold the Christian faith, and

reverence the Scriptures, is a marvel that baffles understanding and taxes charity. To begin to quote texts were useless. The whole Bible would need to be cited. We can only adapt St. Paul's phrase and say, If righteousness come by education, then Christ is dead in vain.

But others perhaps can say with St. Paul, I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing. We are conscious it may be of the deep inward corruption of the very springs of our natural life. Perhaps we have been horrified to perceive in ourselves a relish for evil, to find that we have a liking for lusts which yet we loathe, a delight in passions that frighten us by their malignity. We are constrained to say, Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me; and recognizing at once our corruption and our impotence, we cry to God, create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Such experiences may be most salutary, and they too lead us back to the Cross of Christ, to be comforted with the blessed assurance, that there is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, and that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. And yet this is the second lesson of the Cross, not the first. Sin is not only a disease, a festering canker, that excites compassion for the sufferer and calls for the physician's kindest care. It may be all this, but it is something else first. "Sin is the transgression of the law," not the law of Moses only,

but the law of our being. It is lawlessness, the daring revolt of the creature against the Creator, treason against the Sovereign to whom allegiance is due, treachery against our liege Lord, the parricidal effort to be as God, and to oust Him from His throne. Against this the wrath of God is justly revealed. With sin there can be no compromise. Its guilt admits no palliation. Its sentence cannot be revoked. And though we have been involved in this guilt originally by the transgression of our first father Adam, we can find no excuse herein. For we have allowed the deeds of our fathers, we have sinned after the like example with fuller knowledge and against clearer light. Brethren, do we at all appreciate the guilt of sin? Have we felt the burden to be intolerable? Do we enter into what is meant when the apostle says, that we wait for God's Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come? Knowing the terror of the Lord, have we felt the need to cry, not as a conventional form, but in real agony of spirit, Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions?

Oh, if our hearts have been in any wise hardened, if our consciences have been dulled, so as not to feel keenly the heinousness of sin, let us turn again to contemplate the great object lesson which God has displayed for the instruction of all creatures, men

and angels, for ever. Behold the Lamb of God. Behold Him in Gethsemane. Do you know what is happening? The Lord is laying upon Him the iniquity of us all. Do you know what He feels? Hear then how the Holy Ghost has described His sufferings: "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow Me." "The terrors of death are fallen upon Me; fearfulness and trembling are come upon Me, and horror hath overwhelmed Me." "Thy fierce wrath goeth over Me, while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted." Are these words figurative? See then those great drops of blood that pour from Him like sweat. Is there no reality here? Yes, it is the awful reality that the Holy One of God yields Himself up to taste the bitterness of sin, and endure its burden in His most holy spirit. Behold the Lamb of God. See and hear Him uplifted on the cross. He cries, "Lord, why castest Thou off My soul, why hidest Thou Thy face from Me?" It is because God makes Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin. "Thou hast laid Me in the lowest pit, in darkness in the deeps." Yes, for our iniquities separated between Him and His God, our sins hid God's face from His Beloved.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. The Son of God died that we might be forgiven. And we are forgiven. It is a blessed, soul-healing assurance. But what follows? Beloved,



if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. The apostle suppresses one link in his argument. If God so loved us, we ought to love Him. True, but the measure of our love to God is our love one to another. Who ought to love God most? The Pharisee could answer this rightly when he said, I suppose he to whom He forgave most. And among the universal crowd of sinners, whose debts exceed those of others more than tenfold, to whom does God's forgiveness mean most? Must we not say the baptized? Where then is the brotherly love that should flow from the hearts of them to whom much has been forgiven? Alas, the bitter strife among the baptized still provokes the taunt: See how these Christians *hate* one another; and the worthy name by which we are called is still blasphemed.

Must it be so always? God forbid. We hope, we believe, that a day is coming soon, a great day of Atonement, when the Spirit of God shall prevail to open the eyes of all the faithful baptized. There shall be a great mourning in the spiritual Jerusalem; they shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and discern that among all the families of sinful men, they have been the chiefest transgressors. What tears of reconciliation shall be shed then, when Eastern and Western, Romanist and Protestant, Arminian and Calvinist, Ritualist and Evangelical, each and all perceiving the height of the common calling and the depth of the common sin, shall cast

away for ever the hateful badges of separation, and unite in crying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." And then, when He shall have given the answer of peace, how shall the One Catholic Church at length enter upon her true mission to the Jew, the heathen and all creatures in earth and heaven, loving much because her sins, which were many, are forgiven.

Brethren, in those whom God has called to be first-fruits of His Church, He would see a pattern of these things. He has opened our eyes, at least in measure. He has taught us to make confession according to our ability. His hand is on the veil that divides us from Him. Why does He delay to lift it? Can it be that we, to whom He has forgiven all that debt, are still taking our fellow servant by the throat? Are we still cherishing suspicions and dislikes? Are we still chafing old sores? Are we still hugging old grievances, resenting old wrongs, insisting on old complaints? And do we think to take these into the presence of the Lord and Saviour? *Not so* shall an entrance be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom. Indeed, there is one practical lesson of the Cross which must be learned first, and it is this: Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.







# *The Double Witness.*

## SERMON.

*Pentecost, 1905.*

ON this day the promise was fulfilled, which the Lord gave to His disciples the evening before He suffered and died, that the Father in His name and at His request, and He Himself from the Father, would send them another Paraclete who, during His absence as their Paraclete with the Father,<sup>(1)</sup> might be their Comforter and Advocate on earth. And the issues of the event of this day shall not only be the perfection of the church, but the renewal of heaven and earth and life everlasting for all the creatures of God that willingly take their places under Him whom the Father has set Head over all things, because He had humbled Himself to be minister and servant of all, and given His life a ransom for many.

Let us meditate to-day on some words contained in that promise by the Lord as we read them in the Holy Gospel according to St. John, chap. xv. 26-27, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send

(1) 1 John ii, 1,



unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning."

Two witnesses are required, towards the world as well as within the church, to have a perfect testimony about Jesus Christ, the object and the bearer and finisher of the counsel of God, a divine witness and a human one—the one being the third Person in the Holy Trinity, very God with the Father and the Son. The second, not indeed fallen man in his foolishness and sinfulness, but the man who has been with Christ from the beginning; commencing with the principles of His doctrine as repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, and then growing up in Him unto the stature of His fulness. As the first witness is a person, so is the second not a random congeries of individuals, but a corporate personality, in the first instance the college of apostles whom the Lord has made one, even as He is One with the Father. But they are only the chief members and representatives of another spiritual personality, namely the church, which by their ministry is brought to the same perfect unity and oneness as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father. The Holy Ghost, therefore, and the Church headed up by apostles, are the two witnesses of Christ, co-ordinate to each other, co-equal, not in substance but in action, engaged in one work. The Greek original has the same word, where the English uses

*testify* and *bear witness* alternately ; there is no difference between the two in regard of their work. Oh, behold the condescension of the Holy Ghost, Who is content to stand side by side with man, and rejoices in joint action with him to the glory of Jesus Christ ! Verily the Father is humble, the Son is humble, the Holy Ghost is humble ; humility and meekness are divine properties, divine perfections ! How is it then, that two witnesses are required ? The direction given in the law, acknowledged by the Lord (Matt. xviii. 16) and enjoined by His apostle Paul (2 Cor. xiii. 1 ; 1 Tim. v. 19) even for disputes and trials in the church, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word should be established, is primarily intended to prevent dangers arising from the deceitfulness of the human heart.

Now one of the witnesses we are speaking of, is human, liable if not to lie yet to mistake ; this witness may fail, and, alas, has grievously failed, as we have confessed yesterday. The other however, the Spirit of truth, can neither lie nor err. Why then endanger His faithful and infallible testimony by joining Him to frail human witnesses ? Already the Lord, when still on earth, enlarged and lifted to a higher level that appointment of the law by saying to the Jews, “ It is written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me, beareth witness of Me.” The Father had witnessed of Him beforehand through the prophets ; He continued witnessing

by the works which He gave Him to accomplish, and by words proceeding immediately out of the Father's holy mouth. And with the witness of the Father His own did agree, who was the personal eternal Truth, in whose mouth no guile was found. God in heaven and the Son of Man on earth bore witness of Him, who is God and Man in one person. The twofoldness in Him requires a twofoldness in the testimony concerning Him. He who is God and Man, is always to be testified unto by a divine and by a human witness as well. The substance of the gospel is not a doctrine but a fact, that God in the person of the Son has become Man. "God and Man in one person for ever united ; God and Man through one person for ever reconciled without possibility of disruption ; the fallen creature redeemed unto God beyond possibility of future fall." <sup>(2)</sup>

This blessed fact of the incarnation is not only the basis and foundation of our redemption and salvation, but likewise the root and source of the life, the organisation and the endowment of the church, which herself might justly be called a development of that great mystery of godliness. How this thing can be, that the Lord is very and perfect God, and at the same time very and perfect Man, none can understand or explain ; we just believe and adore. But as to the mutual relation of the two natures in Him, we are not entirely without light ; and those words in the Athanasian creed seem to be very

(<sup>2</sup>) *Apostles' Testimony*, 8vo, p. 20.

helpful, "As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ."

Two distinct elements, body and soul, constitute man ; soul meaning here all that portion of human nature which is not made of the dust of the ground, comprising soul in the proper sense and spirit. Though the soul in one aspect is higher than the body, nevertheless the latter is also necessary and important. Their mutual relation is not like that between rider and horse ; nor is the body merely the case and the organ of the soul. It has to fulfil a most important function towards the soul, namely, to prevent it from straying into the endless regions of sentiment and imagination and reasoning, and to keep it on the safe ground of realities and facts. A right balance between those two elements of human nature is most necessary for the well-being of man. Though distinct from each other, they never should be separated, but always act together, the one being the supplement of the other. The present condition of our bodies, making them often a burden for the soul, is not according to the will of the Creator, and is only transitory ; so is the separation between soul and body by death.

Without pressing too far the application of this analogy, we may say, that in the Lord there are two distinct natures, as it was given to the fathers of Chalcedon to declare : unchanged, unmingled, unseparated. And although the divine nature is for ever immensely higher and superior to the human,

yet the latter is never obscured by the godhead nor degraded to a mere covering and instrument of the same. Moreover, the human nature in Him has to fulfil a most important function, which it alone can perform. It brought and kept the Lord in touch with the infirmities, the temptations, the sufferings and the wants of His brethren. Without flesh and blood He could neither be tempted nor die, and both were not only necessary for our redemption, but the indispensable preparation for His work as High-priest. Therefore, the apostle declares that the *Man*, Christ Jesus, is the one Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. ii. 5); therefore, St. John also repeats with emphasis that Jesus Christ came not by water only, with the life and doctrine of God, but by water and blood, the agent and symbol of creature life, very God and very Man. And even now, after His glorious ascension into heaven, He has not reverted to His omnipotence and omniscience, but for His church's sake He abides in the attitude of a man, who has to receive everything from God. As we see from the superscription of the book of the Revelation, "the revelation of Jesus Christ *which God gave unto Him*, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." Even now the word is true (Mark xiii. 32), "of that day and that hour knoweth not even the Son." Oh, what fellowship of patience and eager expectation is thereby constituted between Him and the members of His body! What strong comfort to know, that He, voluntarily sharing our

ignorance as to day and hour, therefore also shares our waiting and watching ; watching the face of His Father in longing desire, that it may please Him at length to give the sign that the time is fulfilled ! The same mysticism, which undervalues and despises the body in man, obscures the fact of the true manhood of the Lord, and thereby counteracts His gracious work in the church, perhaps still more surely and more perniciously than even rationalism. We have to add finally, that though the two natures in the Lord are distinct and unmingled, yet they are never separated, but always harmoniously co-operating, so that it is impossible to draw a line, saying, here we have the divine, here the human nature. It is always the same divine Person subsisting in divine and human nature, whom we worship in awe, whom we approach in heartfelt confidence and assurance of His tender sympathy.

As with the fact, so with the witness to the fact. Here we have two distinct personalities ; and although the Holy Ghost is infinitely superior to the human personality of the church, yet He has always been pleased to keep His testimony in perfect balance with the testimony of the church, and so much so, that when the latter was feeble and defective, He rather preferred restraining Himself and keeping silence, even at the risk of seeming weakness, to overshadowing His human fellow-witness with the truth and power of His action. Oh, what joy for Him when the Lord prevailed to restore the testi-



mony of the church in its original perfection by giving again apostles ; how mightily will He speak and work, when the apostles shall go forth in the power of the resurrection to minister the fulness of the gospel, not only to the little band of first-fruits, but to all the baptized, making them all witnesses for Christ !

Even here, in this twofold witness, it is not possible to draw a line and to assign distinct realms to the Holy Ghost and to redeemed and sanctified man : they always and everywhere are to go and to act together. Though in one sense spiritual gifts are the proper manifestation and the evidence of the presence of the Holy Ghost, yet they are not the only way of carrying out His testimony. Think of His co-operation in the work of intercession, He Himself making intercession for the saints with unutterable groanings, according to the will of God, heretofore symbolized by the cloud of incense silently ascending to the Father. Think of His co-operation in the consecration of the holy elements when He comes down, and makes the earthly gifts to be heavenly gifts. Everywhere He is adding to the action of the church a divine element, which not even the most faithful and able minister of Christ could supply, as the late apostle Carlyle in his pamphlet on the office of the Paraclete in the church has so wonderfully set forth. Whenever this divine element is wanting, the Holy Ghost being grieved and hindered by

our fault, there is no testimony that Jesus Christ is very God, and the church necessarily sinks down to the earth. But likewise, where the human element is not present and active, His true Manhood is not testified to. Both should always be together. Even herein consists the twofold testimony for Jesus Christ in the church, that in everything she does or says, there is a divine element worked by the Holy Ghost, and a human element supplied by the ministers and members of the Lord.

For instance in the services of the church, there should be not only a spiritual ecstasy, still less mere human feelings and emotions, but as St. Paul says, "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also ; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." Every service should be transacted with the co-operation and in the power of the Holy Ghost, but at the same time it should be a reasonable service, offered by men in spirit, soul and body. Likewise, our private prayer is not only a spirital rapture, as it were out of the body, but finds utterance in distinct and reasonable words.

In all ministerial acts should be a displaying of divine grace and power, but not forgetting that in the vision of Ezekiel all the four living creatures had the likeness of a man, not only the third, which had the face of a man also ; which teaches us that every ministry should be exercised in a human way, in human sympathy with the men ministered unto.

In the carrying out of rule and authority, not only a reckless enforcement of principles and regulations, however true and right, but ample and tender regard to local and even to personal circumstances, customs, wants, and desires. In the guiding onward of the people of God, an imitation of the wisdom of Moses, who, though following in blind faith the leading of the Lord in the pillar of cloud and fire, yet thought it not unfit nor unnecessary to make use of the experience and knowledge of his brother-in-law Hobab, who was born and brought up in the wilderness, and could therefore serve them instead of eyes, to find out the best place for encampment. Every sermon should be the fruit of human diligence, studies, reading and meditation, but at the same time a gift of the Holy Ghost ; and its efficacy will depend not only upon the faithfulness and devotedness of the preacher in delivering it, but on the Holy Ghost saying Amen in the heart of every hearer.

In the exercise of spiritual gifts all prophesying with regard to time and place and to the ecclesiastical, yea, even to the human position, whether male or female, of the speaker ; no tongue, as a rule, without interpretation. For the development of gifts of healing, not only divine power is required ; for what do we read about the Lord Himself ? When He saw diseases, misery, and death, He was moved with compassion—compassion in the proper sense of the word—He suffered with the suffering, He felt

their distresses as His own, and thus His human sympathy set free, so to speak, the divine power of the Holy Ghost for healing and for calling forth from the grave.

Likewise in our daily life and conversation there should be always and everywhere a walking in the Spirit, the showing forth of His fruit in a godly conversation. But it should be done in human liberty, without violating or suppressing the individuality of the man. The ecclesiastical duties should not be overrated and used as a cloak for neglecting the human duties in family, society, commonwealth; the right balance is to be found between the two. The fulness of the Spirit, a condition of incessant inspiration with the mind of Christ, does not supersede, but rather requires perfect soberness and the use of common sense. Those words of St. John, that our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, show the same truth under another point of view; fellowship with the Father, that means to be initiated into the mystery of the eternal counsel of God, and to be endowed with His power for helping to bring that counsel to accomplishment, to share in measure in His dignity and majesty, to be clothed upon with purple. Fellowship with Jesus Christ is to partake in His humility and meekness, to continue with Him in His temptations, to bear His reproach, and to fill up that which is behind of His afflictions, to be clothed not only in the white of His purity and righteousness, but even in the sackcloth of

His sorrows and His repentance for His brethren's sake. For the human understanding it seems impossible to combine both sides, but this is just the mystery of Christian life, always to have them together.

There is further a twofoldness of inspiration in the church, both alike spiritual and necessary, but different in kind and manner. By the one the understanding of man is instructed, the judgment about spiritual matters is enlightened and enlarged ; the will of God is recognised, the truth of the divine revelation is grasped in every direction, conceived and expressed in words of wisdom and righteousness. By the other, the human understanding and will are partly kept down ; the impression of the Holy Ghost is made on the spirit of the man, more or less independently of his understanding. Applied to ministerial functions the one inspiration is the apostolic, the other the prophetic, but both in different forms and kinds permeate all ministries, yea, even all the members of the church. By apostles and prophets the Lord will reveal the hidden mysteries of His counsel to His church. The prophets in the dispensation of the New Testament continue the work begun by the prophets in the Old Testament, though in a far inferior position, obedient and responsible to the apostles and other rulers, to whom they convey words of light and revelation, that the apostles in virtue of their proper gift of wisdom and discernment may use the light for building up the

church through their holy doctrine, precepts and ministries. By the willing obedience and surrender of the prophets to the guidance and the judgment of the apostles, or in the particular church of the angel, the joy of the Holy Ghost is shown forth and testified unto, wherewith He acknowledges and honours the Man Christ Jesus as the one Head of the church. Even now, in our low estate, when none of the apostles are left on earth, we are not without that indispensable twofold testimony. There is light by the prophets and judgment by those whom the Lord has set to guide and lead the sealed company for awhile, certainly in a limited and modified form, perhaps comparable to that condition in Israel of old when they, after returning from Babylon, were indeed not without divine rule and light, but many things had to abide in suspense, unsettled, till there should again stand up a priest with Urim and Thummin, pointing to the coming back of the apostles in resurrection power (Ezra ii. 63).

There is, further, a twofoldness of ministration in the mystical body of Christ, as we find the same in the natural body of man ; as for instance, two eyes, two ears, two hands, two feet. That is not the mystery of coadjutorship, for the principal and his coadjutor are not two but one. It is the dispensation of two equals joined together for a common work. This certainly is not without reference to that word of wisdom, " Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour ; for if they fall



the one will lift up his fellow" (Eccles. iv. 9). But at the bottom there is here again the testimony for Him Who is God and Man. Therefore He Himself sent forth the twelve and the seventy, two by two; and after Pentecost, when the apostles for the first time had to do apostolic work outside Jerusalem, the sealing of the faithful in Samaria, they did not send one, but two out of their midst, choosing Peter, probably the most apostolic amongst the first twelve, and the prophetic John. Again, in our days, the same principle was laid down for the employment of delegations and for visitations by archangels. Still clearer is this yoking together of two equal and yet different ministers, as seen in the latest tentative step which has been taken in sending out together an archangel serving in the universal church and an archangel of a metropolitan church—the one representing rather the universal claims of God, the other the particular and local wants and interests.

There is a twofoldness of spiritual character in the church, first embodied in the two original elements forming the church—Jews and Gentiles—the former created as a nation by a divine miracle and always kept in the bonds of the law of God and under His training, whereas the Gentiles had grown up in human liberty, almost independently of Him. When in course of time the Jewish element had disappeared in the overwhelming majority of Gentiles, another difference came out between the Eastern

church with her gift of understanding divine mysteries, the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation, and the Western church with her excellent talent for handling men, and her special interest in the doctrines concerning the relation of man to God. Those two great divisions of the church should have been two witnesses supplying and helping each other, each using the special gift given to it as good and unanimous stewards of the manifold grace of God. Likewise there should have been a joint action and a mutual completion by the northern and the southern parts of the Western church—the latter a witness for the unity of the church and for the ordinances and sacraments of God in her, the other a witness for the glorious liberty of the children of God, and for the immediate relation of every individual to his heavenly Father. The fact that in both cases, by our perversity and our tendency to onesidedness, strife and schism instead of harmonious co-operation have come, cannot invalidate the gracious intention of God, nor prevent its final glorious accomplishment, when the twenty-four, the apostles to the circumcision and the apostles to the Gentiles—Peter, whose successor the bishop of Rome pretends to be, and Paul, to whom the Protestants like to appeal as their favourite teacher—the oriental twelve of the beginning and the occidental twelve of the end, shall sit on their thrones, and when every tribe of the spiritual Israel shall shine forth in its proper colour and splendour, no longer in jealousy and opposition but

in brotherly love, each esteeming all the others better than himself.

There is finally a twofoldness in our present time and situation also. We understand more and more, that our manifold failures and shortcomings have brought us into this our low estate, and therefore we repent in dust and ashes, willing to be brought down lower and lower into the depths. But at the same time we do not forget that not only human sin and fault have caused this half-hour of silence, but that it has come by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Thus it was written 1800 years before by the hand of St. John, and thus it behoves us and the whole church to suffer and to enter into the glory of her Head. What we have to suffer now, is not only a chastisement for our sins, but also a blessed partaking in the afflictions of Christ for His body, and in the pangs of our mother, the church, in bringing forth the man-child, the establishment of the rule of Christ on earth. Therefore be in pain and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail, but let it be with joy and in blessed hope and assurance of faith. For thy labour is not vain in the Lord.

We are now in a time of transition, in the prelude of perhaps the grandest display of the twofold testimony the church has ever seen, when the two witnesses, as they are called with emphasis, the two witnesses par excellence, shall do their work. They

shall be two olive trees and two candlesticks, two bands of equal ministers, two corporate personalities, ministering oil, apostolic discernment, and light, prophetic revelations. Zechariah in his vision saw but one candlestick between two olive trees, John two candlesticks, probably identical with the two olive trees. As to what this striking difference may mean we do not venture to express any conjecture, only the hope that the light may then shine forth not only in the Western church but in the Eastern also. We read further of the two witnesses, that they are endowed with divine miraculous power, combining the signs and wonders of Moses and Elijah—types of the first and the last apostles—but at the same time we see them clothed in sackcloth, thus having fellowship with the Father in His majesty, and with His Son Jesus Christ in His humility. As He received the fulness of the Holy Ghost, when and because He had undergone the baptism of repentance, confessing the sins of mankind, so those two witnesses are filled with divine power on account of their confession of the sins of the whole church. Their testimony shall strengthen the faithful members in all divisions of the church, to confess Jesus come in the flesh against the lie of antichrist, and their resuscitation and ascension unto heaven shall affright the remnant of men, so that they give glory to the God of heaven. But these things are still future, though we hope very near. We do not expect to be on earth in our present

conditions, when they shall be fulfilled. We wait from day to day for the appearing of the Lord. So let us hearken to the twofold testimony of love by the Spirit and the bride, the church, summed up in one word, Come! Yea, let him that heareth say : Come! come, Lord Jesu, come quickly!







## HOMILY.

*Meeting of Brethren  
in London*

*July 14th, 1905.*

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THE Mosaic passover, though a memorial of great mercies, was eaten with bitter herbs. So should we also do on this 14th of July.

When 70 years ago, the spiritual manchild, the new-born apostleship, was—as the word of prophecy expressed it—laid in a manger in Newman Street, the Comforter inspired songs of joy, but in them was heard also a note of sorrow. “Oh, ye apostles! be ye one, know ye the mystery of the first and the last, know ye the birth and the death. Oh, ye angels! know ye the song of triumph, know ye the bitterness of the garden; the birth and the death ye are called unto. Mingle ye your song with tears.”

It would seem to have been an intimation of the many trials through which both the apostles and those who followed them would have to go. The warning was further emphasized when on the forty-second anniversary of the separation, the pillar of apostles left the festival gathering, where he never appeared again. And now, twenty-eight years

22/1905  
later, we meet for the fifth time on this commemorative day without any apostle living in our midst. Verily there is cause for tears. Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God.

In the form of a servant the Apostle and High-priest of our profession came to His own ; but, like Israel 1800 years ago, His own received him not. Therefore has He withdrawn His right hand, which had been stretched out for the gathering of all His scattered sheep, for the perfecting of His one church.

But why are those who rejoiced in the restoration of God's ordinances left behind ? yea, and not merely left behind, but humiliated ; no longer allowed to lift up the voice of testimony, or to offer the incense as heretofore. Is it not that we may learn to apprehend more deeply our oneness with the whole family of the baptized, one with them in glorious calling, one with them in purifying chastisement ? During many years the evangelist testimony to the unity of the body has sounded throughout all Christendom, but have we indeed lived up to it ? Have we practised the theory which we proclaimed ?

The first apostles were sent to build the church which, though growing out of Israel, was a new creation. Not so the last apostles, sent forth, not to introduce a new covenant, not to proclaim a new gospel, but to restore the breaches of Zion and the broken walls of Jerusalem, to search out the gold and

the "stones of the sanctuary poured out in the top of every street" (Lam. iv. 1). Have we been—are we truly thankful to our brethren in the Eastern and in the Western churches for all the rich treasures of doctrine and worship, which they faithfully preserved during the course of centuries, so that the apostles of our days could find them there? When rehearsing the Nicene or the Athanasian creed, are we mindful of the immense debt we owe to the fathers of the Eastern church, who discerned the subtle wanderings of Greek thought, and in manly faith stood firm for the fundamental truths? Are we conscious of the communion of saints when we offer unto God prayers and anthems, which long before our day ascended from Constantinople and Rome, and which still ascend in all Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox congregations throughout all the world?

Are not our thoughts far more occupied with the mote in the eyes of our brethren, than with the past and present workings of God the Holy Ghost in them? When we were called to show unto the house of Jacob their sins and to warn them of the approaching judgments, have we done it, not as standing ourselves on a higher platform, but in true brotherly love as being one with them—one in guilt, humbly acknowledging that their sin is ours? Have we done it in the mind of Jesus Who, fully knowing how His cruel death was being plotted in Jerusalem, yet could not refrain from weeping tears of unfeigned love over that city?

And now, when the judgments are beginning both in the West and in the East, as seen in the oppression of the Roman church in France, in the persecution of the Armenians, in the humiliation of Russia, are we not inclined rather to sympathize with the executors of these Divine judgments, than to have fellow-feeling with our baptized brethren in their terrible sufferings? When one member suffers, should not all the members suffer with it?

We are told that they have deserved such judgment for all their former and present iniquities. This may be so; we dare neither deny nor affirm; God is the Judge. But should not we in humility of heart acknowledge that if God were to deal with us after our iniquities, we deserve nothing less?

When Israel rose up in open rebellion against Moses, Aaron stood between the living and the dead, making atonement for the people and *the plague was stayed*. (Numb. xvi. 48). Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God's predicted judgments may be averted? Do we assume like Jonah that our Lord is bound to fulfil all that He has spoken in His righteous wrath? If Christendom, like Nineveh of old, should repent in dust and ashes, will not God be merciful and forgive? Our Father in heaven mourns when He is forced to visit His children in His wrath. He does it not until His love has exhausted all means for bringing them to repentance. He is still the same, Who spake through Hosea the prophet (xi. 8): "How

shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not man."

We whom the Lord had called and anointed to be intercessors—we who, for the time, ought to be teachers have still need to be taught the first principles of true intercession. [Israel had sinned grievously, Moses could not deny it, there was not even a sign of repentance, yet Moses would not separate himself from them, not even when the Lord offered to make of him a great nation. He desired no privilege in which they should not share. He confessed on behalf of the whole people, and in boldness of faith he dared add: If Thou wilt not forgive their sin, blot me out of Thy book. And *the Lord hearkened unto Moses* (Exod. xxxii. 32; Deuter. ix. 19; Ps. cvi. 23). *God heard*]

[He] Who is more than Moses called us to stand in the breach with Him and to cry daily: "Revive us, O God! revive Thy church, we beseech Thee." Did we say so merely because it was thus printed in the liturgy? Did we really believe that whatsoever we ask in the name of Jesus will certainly be granted by the Father? May not the honour of assisting the merciful High Priest in His incense offering have been taken from us, because in thought we



limited the omnipotence of His love, as if the revival of His church could only be brought about through the great tribulation? Was there no leaven of the Pharisee in us, as if we alone could be accounted worthy to escape?

Yet the apostles had taught us to pray on this very anniversary of their separation: "Send Thine apostles to all christian people . . . perfecting them in holiness . . . that they may be saved from the snares of antichrist and the storm of Thine anger."

In mercy has the Lord chastised us, and led us to discern our manifold failings and shortcomings. Three years ago, on this very 14th of July, we met before God in solemn confession. The Lord is waiting for the fruits worthy of repentance. He waits to see whether we indeed turn from our former ways, whether we fervently believe that He Who alone works great marvels, will send down the healthful spirit of His grace upon all bishops and curates in both the Eastern and Western churches and upon all congregations committed to their charge, and pour upon them the continual dew of His blessing. Oh! how the Lord longs to hear the prayer of faith without wavering, that He may make manifest the power and efficacy of intercession.

He comes to the help of our unbelief in showing us symptoms of revival all around us, amongst Protestants, amongst Roman Catholics, amongst Russian Orthodox. There may be human admix-

ture, yet the working of God's Spirit is obvious. Let us beware of forbidding them because they follow not with us.

From our imaginary pedestal the Lord has brought us down into the depths, and the Holy Comforter exhorts us daily to come down lower still. It was when Jacob bowed himself to the ground seven times that Esau fell on his neck and kissed him. So let us bow down in the sight of those whom our Lord and Master is not ashamed to call brethren. The Lord would see us accounting ourselves chief sinners, because we have thought highly of ourselves on account of the light and the manifold blessings ministered through the restored apostleship; whereas these very mercies of God should have made us examples of meekness and lowliness of heart. We were anointed, not to pray *for* the baptized, as if we stood apart, but to pray *with* them as members of one and the same body, as alike unworthy of the least of all God's mercies. We ought so to identify ourselves with them all, that we feel our own salvation jeopardized except the whole covenanted people turn to repentance.

All God's promises concerning the first resurrection and change, the translation, the marriage of the Lamb, the reigning with Christ, were given to the whole church. How then dare we claim any precedence for ourselves or be engrossed with thoughts about ourselves? Is it not presumptuous anticipation of the Lord's judgment when we take

it for granted that *we* are the first-fruits, that *we* are Philadelphia? Let us rather remember that the candlestick has been removed from Ephesus of old. Let us remember with trembling that the first shall be last and the last shall be first. Let our one thought, our one longing, our one incessant prayer—as the apostles have taught us in their liturgy—be for the whole church catholic, that the Heavenly Bridegroom at His coming may find His beloved and longed for bride ready to be presented before His Father.

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John iii. 16). Those who verily do so, them will the Lord at His appearing acknowledge as His Philadelphia, rooted and grounded in love.

Now unto Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

## HOMILY.

*13th Sunday after Pentecost.*

*Sept 10, 1905*

2 COR. III. 4-9; MARK VII. 32.

THEY brought unto Jesus one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they besought Him to put His hand upon him.

What a terrible affliction to be deaf!—precluded from hearing the uplifting song of birds, the awe-inspiring rolling of the thunder, or any of those many voices which proclaim that God's creation is teeming with life. In the midst of company a deaf man feels isolated; he never hears the human voice. Words both of kindness and of reproof are lost to him. Never broken silence as of the grave surrounds him. Continual sensation of loneliness oppresses him.

Worse still if dumbness be added, as so often is the case. Speech, reasonable speech is the paramount privilege of man. It leads him into intercourse with his fellow-creatures. It enables him to commune with God. Imagine how much he who is deaf and dumb misses in public worship—he hears neither epistle nor gospel, neither absolution nor salutation of peace—he cannot join in song or response. Deep compassion must fill every heart

which is not dead in selfishness. Such compassion constrained those unnamed friends who brought unto Jesus one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. As he could not ask for himself, they besought Jesus on his behalf. Their brotherly love was rewarded. In tenderness Jesus took him aside from the multitude, for such sufferers use to be shy and distrusting.

The Lord touched first his ears, then his tongue, and looking up to heaven He sighed. In His humiliation here on earth Jesus could do nothing of Himself, but what He saw the Father do (John v. 19). Therefore, He lifted up His eyes to heaven from whence His help came—and He sighed. Not merely in compassion with this one sufferer. His prophet's eye saw as in a symbol the whole race of Adam, once created in the image of God, now deaf to the Creator's voice, dumb for His praise. In that sigh the Redeemer poured out the sorrowing longing of His love to loose those who were appointed to death. In full assurance that His Father always hears Him, He spake the mighty Ephphatha, be opened. And straightway the patient's ears were opened and the string of His tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. His compassion with all who suffer is the same. His longing to deliver all who are desolate and oppressed is the same. His wondrous love which constrained Him not to shrink from

the agony in Gethsemane, nor from the terrors of darkness on Golgotha, is unchanged. There is but one difference. He Who then walked on earth in the form of a servant has since been exalted at the Father's right hand; all power in heaven and on earth has been given unto Him. He, the merciful High Priest, ever prays for us.

How then is there still so much misery on earth? Is it not because of the all but universal deafness and dumbness for heavenly things?

He that has an ear let him hear. Let him withdraw at least sometimes, at least on the Lord's day if that must necessarily be all, let him withdraw from the deafening and deadening turmoil of this world, to give ear to the voice of Him Who still speaks from heaven: Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Many, alas! stop their ears like the deaf adder, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. Many amongst the baptised are conscious of their isolation, perishing with hunger, remembering their Father's house, in which even the hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but they lack the humility of heart or the energy of will to break through the impediments of speech, and to say to their still loving Father: I have sinned against heaven and before Thee.

Physical deafness is grievous; spiritual deafness is fatal.



The whole church in all its divisions is well-nigh deaf. Even those who cleave to the written word of God are dull of hearing in regard to the living voice of God, more especially in regard to the still small voice which, these 70 years, has been bidding all to awake, to arise, to go and meet the heavenly Bridegroom. In consequence of this deafness the church has, moreover, an impediment in her speech, so that discordant sounds of strife come forth, where the one voice of confession and longing for the Redeemer's purifying grace should be heard.

Let those who take pleasure in the stones of Zion and favour the dust thereof, let them not curse the deaf (Lev. xix. 14), but rather let them do like those unnamed friends in our gospel, let them bring the whole church before Jesus, and on her behalf beseech Him to put His hand—ah! His healing hand—upon her. The fervent prayer, out of a truly Philadelphian heart, avails much. Surely He, Who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world, He will answer. He will take her aside from the multitude. Not willing to expose the shame of the penitent, he will deal with her in secrecy. He will allure her and bring her into the wilderness (Hosea ii. 14, Apoc. xii. 14). There will He speak His mighty Ephphatha, opening her ears to hear how He speaks comfortably to her, giving her the valley of Achor for a door of hope. There He will remove all impediment of speech, so that she will burst forth :

Have mercy upon me, O God! according to Thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation, and my mouth shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness. O Lord! open Thou my lips and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise (Ps. li. 1, 14, 15).

Oh! who can conceive the joy, which then shall fill the heart of Jesus Christ, when at last He shall see of the travail of His soul, shall see brethren divided during so many weary centuries, at last dwelling together in unity. There the Lord will command the blessing, even life for evermore.

Then shall the mystery be made manifest, which has not yet been seen, though believed, even the glory of the ministration of the spirit far exceeding the glory of the ministration of the letter. Then shall Israel and the Gentiles be beyond measure astonished, saying, Jesus Christ has done all things well: He makes both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

Then shall every knee bow at the name of Jesus, and every tongue shall confess Jesus Christ to be the Head of the Church, the King of Israel, the Saviour of the world.







## SERMON.

*Christmas Day, 1905.*

*"In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren."*  
—HEB. ii. 17.

WHOM did it behove?—Him Who in the beginning, in prehistoric time, yea, from eternity, was with God, was God.

Is it not presumptuous for any creature to say, it behoved God?—no doubt it would be blasphemous, if it had not been inspired by the Holy Ghost.

A few verses earlier it is written: It became Him for Whom and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. And more emphatic\* still is the expression used by the risen Lord to the disciples of Emmaus: ought (literally must) not Christ to have suffered these things? and again the same day: thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead.

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\* Heb. ii. 17; ὡφειλε. Heb. ii. 10; ἔπρεπε. Luke xxiv. 26, 46; ἔδει.



Pagans of old prattled about some immutable fate binding even their gods. Of course we cannot entertain such a thought for a moment. We bow down in adoration, when Almighty God tells us that He has imposed such duty upon Himself. As God swears by Himself, so He decrees by Himself, and for man's "strong consolation" He Himself declares the decree.

Almighty God, Who has created all things and upholds all things by the word of His power,—God in Whom all men live, and move, and have their being, He has determined the times before appointed. He shapes the future and overrules the devices of the adversary, whom He tolerates only for a time\* for men's trial and training.

The revelation of God's decree we call prophecy. The first prophecy was given unto fallen man, even before he was driven out of paradise, as a star of hope during his wanderings through the night. It proclaimed enmity between the serpent's and the woman's seed. The latter's heel—but finally the serpent's head—was to be bruised. This prophecy, spoken by God Himself, caused several in the course of ages diligently to enquire and to search concerning this promised salvation. In answer to their earnest searchings, the Spirit of Christ granted them visions both of the sufferings (the bruised heel) and

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\* Hence the name : the god of this age (æon).—2 Cor. iv. 4.

of the glory that should follow (after the bruising of the serpent's head).

Thus the veil was gradually lifted and the image of the coming Redeemer presented unto men with increasing clearness of detail. Foremost among the Old Testament prophets stands Isaiah, unto whom it was revealed that unto us men a Son should be given, a son of man, yet not born in the common way, but from a virgin. His Name should be Emmanuel, God with us, a veiled intimation of the mystery of incarnation. Man of the substance of His mother, born in the world, a branch out of the stem of Jesse,—yet God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the world. The servant of God, anointed with the sevenfold fulness of the Spirit of God—yet having no form nor comeliness, despised and rejected of men, brought to the slaughter dumb as a lamb, and yet the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, upon Whose shoulders should be the government, and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end.

No human mind could apprehend these seemingly conflicting prophecies. But in patient confidence and joyful hope the faithful looked for the promised redemption, though knowing neither when nor how.

At last the set time came. Why at last? Hope deferred makes the heart sick. Why then four thousand years of delay?

Here again we stand silent before the decree of God. Our times are in His hand. Yet He does not act arbitrarily. Man needed to be prepared for the coming of the Emmanuel, for the receiving of so peerless a gift.

No error is so deeply rooted in man as the presumption that he can help himself, be it by his efforts and energy, or by yielding to a process of spontaneous evolution,—from cellule to animal, from animal to reasonable man, from reasonable man to saint. Ever since Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, the human mind has been permeated with the lie: eat of the tree of knowledge and ye shall be as gods. Even the covenanted people, Israel, unto whom the oracles of God were entrusted, assumed the mere knowledge of God's law to be their safety. To eradicate such fatal error, to convince man that without the Divine Redeemer he can do nothing, a school of centuries was needed.

Only God could discern whether the lesson had been so learnt, by some at least, that He could lead them a step forward.

When the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son. For us shortlived men time is marked by hours. The clock goes on ticking; when the number of sixty minutes is full, then it strikes the hour. There is some analogy in the Divine reckoning. There is a continuous moving on, but at set times the heavenly clock strikes, some grand act of God strikes our attention. We cannot now

illustrate this. Let us merely call to mind the pregnant word, which our Lord spake twice at the close of His life on earth: Father! the hour is come.\*

This day we commemorate the fact that God's hour had come for the birth of the promised Messiah. In a measure we may discern how God had prepared all things for His coming. The Roman Empire, the fourth of the monarchies revealed unto Daniel, comprehended the greater part of the world as then known, in one grand organism, outwardly a model of power and order, of pagan civilization and justice, inwardly cankered with scepticism and gross immorality. The emperor claimed divine honours, thus forestalling antichrist. The nobler spirits, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, sought for immortality (Rom. ii. 7), were sick at heart, and turned to the Jews in hope of finding solace for their weary souls. For Jews were scattered through all the Roman empire, especially in the cities on both sides of the Mediterranean, where they found ample openings for their commerce. There, according to God's purpose, they stood as witnesses for the paramount truth: there is but one God. In former centuries, even during the glorious reign of Solomon, the Jews had been constantly falling back into idolatry, but never again since the captivity in

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\* John xii. 23, xvii. 1; compare Matt. xxvi. 45; Mark xiv. 35, 41; John vii. 30, viii. 20.

Babylon. That terrible chastisement had purged them from this sin.

So far, they were ripe for being led a step onward. And the loss of their national independence, their being incorporated into the Roman empire, caused them to look the more intently for their promised Deliverer and King. The scattered colonies of Jews were like spiritual telegraph stations along the lines of world traffic, provided by God for the spreading of the gospel unto the ends of the earth.

The set time had come. The hour was about to strike. No man knew it until God sent one of His chief messengers, Gabriel, to announce to a few chosen ones, first the birth of the forerunner, then six months later the birth of the Emmanuel.

How cautiously, how circumspectly, how secretly, did God proceed both before and after. His most momentous act since the creation of the world, it is—if we may use the image—all wrapped up in swaddling clothes, hidden from the shameless gaze of curiosity, revealed only to reverent faith. Never before had God condescended to come down so low towards man,—sinful and corrupt man. Never before had man been lifted up so high. God manifested Himself to us miserable sinners in a way unprecedented, unimagined; even in human flesh, God who is spirit, eternal God, made flesh.

Never for a moment can God cease to be God. But in redeeming love He condescends to partake

of that human nature, which in mortal man four thousand years of increasing iniquity had brought so low. Originally, human nature had been destined by the Creator to increase with Divine increase, so as to become a habitation of God, a temple of the Holy Ghost. But oh! how its capacity had shrunk! how its loftiness of aspiration had vanished! how the nobility of its birth had been obliterated by centuries of bondage! Weakened, infirm, powerless against the wiles of the enemy, abased, thus stood man ready to be engulfed by the mire of wickedness and to be buried into everlasting death.

That was the fulness of time for God to come down from heaven and to grasp man in the very moment of his sinking away for ever.

God took manhood into Himself, that He might rescue it, revive it, cleanse it, sanctify it, yea, and glorify it by imparting unto it endless life. He made Himself one with man. As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, so He took part of the same; not of the flesh and blood as it came forth out of the hands of the Creator, when all was very good. He took not upon Him the seed of unfallen Adam; no, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, the woman's, the virgin Mary's seed. For verily it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto us; in all things, sin only excepted. For He is, and He remains, God most holy, God and Man in one person, the One Redeemer. The



Eternal Son of God became Son of Man in order to make us sons of God in Him.

Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, far beyond the reach of human intellect, only childlike faith can lay hold of it. Our proud nature rebels against becoming as little children. We will be men, putting away all childish things. From such God hides His mysteries; He reveals them unto babes. The Eternal Word did not shrink from becoming a little child Himself. The sign given unto the shepherds of Bethlehem—yea, and the sign given unto us—it is a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. For it behoved Him to be made like unto us in all things, even in infancy.

God manifesting Himself in a babe. Emmanuel, God with us, not even shrinking from such helpless, absolutely dependent condition, in order that He may know by experience all that man has to go through during the whole process of life, from infancy to adolescence, from adolescence to manhood. In all things like unto us, that He may know all our sufferings, all our temptations, all our conflicts, in order that He, never forgetting that which He has gone through for our sakes, at all times, even when risen and glorified in heaven, may be touched with the feeling of our infirmities and succour us in all our needs.

Except we begin here at the manger in Bethlehem to adore the Dayspring from on high, we shall never be able to behold the brightness of the Sun of

Righteousness, when—oh! be it soon!—He arises with healing in His wings.

God manifesting Himself in a suckling; it is the token and pledge that God does not wait until man can intelligently choose for himself. No, God ordains strength out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, whom in the baptismal font He grafts into the True Vine, making them one with His Incarnate Son and thus children of God, and if children, then heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ. Here at the manger of Bethlehem let us drink in the never-failing comfort that salvation is not the reward of our merits, not the result of our works, but the free gift of our God's peerless mercy and love, for Jesus Christ's merits sake. Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

The sign given was a babe lying in a manger, for there was no room for Him in the inn. Not even in the city of David was there room for the true David. Thus, in a symbol, it was shown forth that there was no room in the chosen people for their promised Messiah. He came unto His own and His own received Him not. He knew beforehand that such should be the case, and yet He came. Yet He counted it to be the fulness of time. For it behoved Him to be made like unto us in all things, for our sakes becoming poor, that we, through His poverty, might be rich. Like unto us in all things He, the Holy One, taking our sins upon

Himself, was made sin for us, that His bloody sweat and agony might be the atonement for our sin. The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many.

The inn was built by men for their own comfort, but there was no room for Him Who in perfect love, from perfect love, came down from heaven to bring us never ending comfort. History repeats itself. Many and various inns have men built since, but in none of them, not even in those built by Christian nations, neither in the established nor in the dissenting churches, is there room for Him to act and reign entirely according to God's will and purpose.

And in our hearts, does He find room there to reign absolutely? We do not refuse Him admission; we allow Him some place, but is He the undisputed Lord of all in us? have we no corner reserved to please ourselves? (Rom. xv. 1, 3).

When Israel promised to do all that the Lord would command through Moses, the Lord said: "They have well said in all that they have spoken. Oh! that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep My commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children for ever! (Deut. v. 29). Has not our Lord cause to speak likewise concerning us? does not the Holy Ghost repeatedly testify that the Lord is straitened in our midst, that the inn where He would dwell is not fully at His disposal?

Our Lord's first coming is a token and pledge of His return, for His work is not yet consummated. He longs to complete the manifestation of God's goodwill towards men, that the prophecy sung by the angels and heard only by the shepherds in the lonely night, may at last become a reality; that there may be peace on earth; that all voices of strife and hatred, of party spirit and uncharitableness may be silenced by the one harmonious song of all: Glory be to God on high.

He knows that again there shall be no room in the inn. When the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth? Yet He will come, for His mercy endureth for ever. He will not forsake the work of His own hands. May it not be possible that again He will act circumspectly, secretly, proceeding by slow and hidden steps contrary to common expectations?

The virgin Mary was the first and for some time the only one to know the day of His coming; then followed Elizabeth, then Joseph. And when He had actually come, only very few were—if we may so say—taken into God's confidence; the shepherds of Bethlehem; forty days later, Simeon and Anna; thereafter the wise men from the East. The enquiries of these latter troubled Herod and Jerusalem for a while, but like a vague rumour it soon died out. And then followed thirty long years during which God Incarnate actually lived on the earth, unknown to all except Mary and Joseph.

The Jews truly expected Him, but reading God's prophecies onesidedly they had made up their minds that He must come in royal power, assigning unto them places of honour in His kingdom and destroying His enemies.

May nothing similar ever hinder any of us from beholding our blessed Lord when He appears.

*Albury*  
*July 21/1904.*  
SERMON.  
*Lent.*

*"Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."—LUKE xxi. 34.*

ON Wednesday next we enter upon that season of the ecclesiastical year which is commonly called Lent, and is observed by a vast number of devout Christian people as a time of abstinence, humiliation and devotion. I propose to speak of the principles which underlie this observance, and of their application to ourselves.

Let me remark in the first place that I have found reason to think that there is among us a good deal of misunderstanding on this subject. I sometimes hear it said, Oh, we do not keep Lent, as if there were something in that observance not in harmony with apostles' doctrine, or as if our spiritual attainments made any such observance superfluous on our part. Now the apostles have never said anything, so far as I know, to justify such ideas as these. They have expressed not the slightest doubt that the Lenten fast, when observed with sincerity and in the fear of God, has been acceptable to Him, and has been followed by His blessing. And they have never taught us that we have no need of self-



denial, self-discipline, and humiliation. Quite the contrary. Only in framing the Liturgy, which was designed to be a pattern of the true order of worship for the Church on earth, the apostles did not find it right to include therein an annual fast of several weeks' duration, because such an annual fast—however appropriate when the joyful hope of the Lord's coming was obscured, when the ministries given at the beginning were lost, and the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost unknown—seemed inappropriate either to the true normal condition of the Church, or to the spiritual situation when God began His work of revival seventy years ago. This very argument may indeed suggest the thought that in our present low estate, when the apostleship has again been withdrawn, the observance of Lent might be very fitting. To this I can only reply, that the Lord has not given to the coadjutors any indication that it is His will that we should now adopt a fixed rule in this matter, though He has already taught us to keep some penitential seasons, and has warned us that He may call on us to keep another. Our duty, therefore, seems to be twofold. On the one hand we should be very careful neither to despise nor to offend those of our brethren around us who feel it their duty to keep the season of Lent as specially sacred. On the other hand, if we do not feel it necessary to adopt their rule, yet we should certainly practise in some measure and at some time that spiritual discipline which is the true object of all fasts.

Let us now turn to the words of our Lord, recorded in our text. He is speaking of the day of His coming again, that day which St. Paul says so cometh as a thief in the night, and which the Lord warns us may come upon even faithful disciples unawares. That day includes many events ; it will be a day of joy and salvation to those who are ready, it may be a day of anguish and tribulation to those who are not. And so the Lord bids us take heed to ourselves lest that day come upon us, as it will upon some, as a *snare*. The figure here used is that of a covey of birds feeding securely in a field, all unaware of the net spread by the fowler, which in a moment may suddenly fall over them. The Lord says, be not overcharged—literally, be not weighted or weighed down. If there be anything that hinders for one instant the stroke of the wings in flight, the bird is captured. The snare or net sets forth in this connection the great tribulation under Antichrist, “that hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world,” from which the Lord bids us pray that we may be accounted worthy to escape. It may be, indeed, that even for those who are caught in the snare some rescue may be found. God’s mercy endureth for ever. There may be those who shall sing with penitent thanksgiving, “our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers ; the snare is broken and we are escaped.” There is a great multitude which comes out of the great tribulation. But it is better to flee as a bird to the mountain before the net overtakes

us, better to stand before the Son of Man ere that wicked one be revealed, better to rescue others than to need rescue ourselves. Let us not tempt God by presuming on His purposes of mercy.

Proceeding to consider the things by which the Lord warns us that our hearts may be weighed down, so as to produce unreadiness, we note the striking fact that the dangers indicated consist in the excess of things which in themselves are innocent and necessary. We *must* eat and drink, we *must* fulfil duties belonging to this life. But surfeiting, drunkenness, the cares of this life, these expressions imply that things which are rightly a means have become to us an end in themselves, that the appetites which should be under strict control have become our masters, that our duties have grown to be our idols. This shews where the need of self-examination, self-discipline and abstinence comes in.

Probably the Lord's words may have a deeper significance than lies on the surface, and one that extends beyond the region of the bodily appetites. Yet we cannot afford to pass by the literal meaning of what He says. St. Paul did not think that he could afford to do so. There is a well-known passage in which he says, I keep under, or buffet, my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be rejected. The body is here contemplated as an adversary to be overcome. Its appetites may get such a mastery over us as to hinder us in

serving God. In another epistle he corrects the extravagance of those who would avoid the danger by laying down hard and fast rules—touch not, taste not, handle not. This would be to forfeit our liberty, and to be like children that cannot be trusted. All things are lawful for me, he says, but I will not be brought under the power of any. That is the point, not to be under the power of any. Perhaps none of us here present seems to himself or to others much in danger of surfeiting or drunkenness, but are we sure that we are not under the power of any appetite? Many of us may say and really think that we don't care much what we eat, yet our equanimity is liable to be rather disturbed if we don't get what we like, not to contemplate such an alarming contingency as going without a meal altogether. We may never get tipsy, but perhaps we are unhappy if we are deprived of our wine, or beer, or other stimulant. Or it may be tobacco, or even tea, or coffee, or sweetmeats that we can't possibly do without. All these things are God's creatures and therefore good, if used in a sanctified way. But if we discover that this or that is getting such a hold on us that the want of it makes us miserable or fretful, then it is time to keep under the body and to use abstinence; to say I will go without this thing for a given time that my heart may not be overcharged, and that I may retain my freedom. And if any of us should find occasion thus to practise discipline, I don't know that any more suitable season could be found than this

period of Lent in which we are or should be preparing ourselves for the greatest of Christian festivals. Only, if we choose to fast in any measure, let us do it without advertising the fact, and let us beware of the temptation to think ourselves superior to others who do not think it necessary to do anything of the kind.

We may now carry the principle which our Lord's words suggest a little further, for surely meat and drink are not the only departments in which we are liable to excess or surfeiting. What about our amusements, our pursuits, or even our necessary business? It is sometimes made a matter of reproach to us English people that the only things we are furiously in earnest about are games and sport. I fear there is too much truth in the charge, and confess that I regard the modern craze for games and sport as a national calamity. But we are here concerned only with the possible danger in such things to the spiritual life. Let us beware lest our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, lest we become intoxicated with the delight of any earthly things, and consequently find heavenly things wearisome or insipid. Cricket and tennis, cards and billiards, dancing and acting, these and many other things may be very legitimate modes of recreation. Only if they become a passion, and begin to absorb our souls, then it is time to cry halt, to take one's self in hand lest we become slaves. The same thing is true of less frivolous matters. Perhaps we take up some branch of art, such as music or painting, or

we pursue the study of some science, or some department of literature. The same danger always recurs. Nay, even our real duties may prove a snare to us, if we become so absorbed in them as to forget that they must always be fulfilled in relation to the duties of others ; and, strangest of all, even the sacred work of the ministry itself may be fulfilled so as to produce a surfeit of self-complacency and an inebriety of spiritual imaginations. How much need have we all to pray "that those necessary works wherein we are engaged, whether in the affairs of the Church, or of this world, may not prevail to hinder us, but that at the appearing and advent of God's Son we may hasten with joy to meet Him."

There are, of course, other "deeds of the body" which stand in a very different category from those to which we have referred. These must be *mortified*, the apostle says, that is, put to death. Here there can be no question about moderation or excess. Such things are absolutely deadly. "The works of the flesh are manifest, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, and such like." The warning is peremptory and uncompromising, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." We live, unhappily, in a time when such things, which it is a shame even to speak of, are lightly treated and easily condoned. Let us not suppose that we have no need to be on our guard against these grosser forms of sin which imply open unfaithfulness, but at the same time let us remember



what I have already pointed out, that the Lord's warning about unreadiness is addressed to the faithful, against evils which may be not manifest but unsuspected.

Thus far we have been dealing with the deeds of the body only, and the bringing into subjection of the bodily appetites. But the body is not the only part of our being in which discipline is needed, nor is it by deeds alone that we may offend. Every day we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed. Do not our words and thoughts need to be brought into subjection also? We know what St. James teaches us, "If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain." "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." Observe that the figure used is similar to that of St. Paul. In the one case the body is an adversary to be buffeted. Here the tongue is compared to a horse which will run away with you and carry you to disaster unless it be strongly controlled with bit and bridle. Which of us is blameless in this matter? Who has not uttered things which we would give anything to recall? It is appalling to think of the mischief that is done by our hasty words, of the consciences that are wounded, the affections that are estranged, the strifes and enmities that are kindled; and all because we want to relieve our own annoyance and therefore stab somebody else; or we want to produce a startling effect and

therefore don't trouble ourselves to be accurate about facts ; or we want to show off our wit, and forget that our fellow creatures were not made to be the butts for our jests, Even the truth is not always to be spoken. There is a time to speak, but also a time to keep silence ; and further, there are cases in which we have a duty or a right to speak, but there are many more in which we have none. We are all tempted to say or think, "Our lips are our own, who is lord over us?" We all have need to confess with the prophet, "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." We shall all do well to pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips." Can we do better than begin at once, and make this season of Lent a special time of prayer and watchfulness to this end?

And since words are the outcome of thoughts, we are driven one step further. We must control our thoughts also. If this were not possible there could be no sin in thought, but we daily confess that there is. We cannot indeed prevent evil thoughts being suggested to us by our adversary the devil. They are like skirmishers from a hostile camp, trying to disturb and harass us. They must be captured and put down ; as the apostle says, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Otherwise if they gain an entrance and are allowed to remain, they may capture and take possession of *us*. It is wonderful how a mere surmise, for which there is no tangible

foundation at all, may gradually grow into the proportions of an assured reality. We hear someone say something which we do not understand. Presently it occurs to us that he may have meant something which we don't like. If we do not at once take that thought prisoner and arrest it, in a short time we shall be quite sure that the word spoken was directed against ourselves, and intended to be offensive. Or again, we hear it suggested as a possibility that this or that person may do something of which we should very much disapprove. Then we begin to follow out in our imaginations all the evil consequences that might ensue ; and presently we shall discover that our hearts are full of resentment and anger about a crime that has not yet been committed. It may not be committed at all, but the mischief in our hearts may remain. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord." So David prayed, and so should we. And this word *meditation* suggests another side of the matter. The best way to avoid evil thoughts is to be occupied with good ones. But do we ever meditate, in the scriptural sense of the word ? Do we allow ourselves time, even a few minutes in the day, to be quiet, to think about the things of God and hold some communion with Him ? Perhaps we say our daily prayers, perhaps we read our daily portions of scripture, but do we not often do both in the manner of a formal call on a rather tiresome acquaintance, from which we are glad to escape as

soon as possible to more congenial occupations? What father would like to find that his children are never so bored as when they are in his company? Our Heavenly Father is grieved if He sees that, though we may desire His blessings, we are not particularly anxious to know *Him* more intimately. And yet to know Him, as our Lord Jesus Christ said, is life eternal, to know Him is abiding peace and unmingled joy, the only perfect satisfaction of all desires. Seek and ye shall find. He waits to reveal Himself to every longing soul. Why should we not use this season of Lent to devote a little more time to God, and become better acquainted with Him?

I fear that I am wandering rather far from my text. Let us return to our Lord's words and their application. Lent is kept as a time of spiritual preparation for the festival of the Resurrection. Yes, but is not the whole Christian dispensation a time of spiritual preparation for the *fact* of the Resurrection? Oh, if it had been so kept by the Catholic Church in all ages, if the words recited by so many Christian lips had always been the expression of the desires of Christian hearts—"I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come"—if St. Paul's eager attitude had been maintained—"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling—then perchance an annual season of fasting and humiliation might never have been required; then perhaps, with all eyes fixed on the one hope, the Church might have marched on

in unity, and schism might never have broken her ranks ; then the voice of the Comforter, prophesying of the glory that should follow, might never have been despised or quenched ; then pastors might have tended Christ's sheep, evangelists might have left the world without excuse by preaching the full gospel of the kingdom, prophets might have lightened our darkness with heavenly revelation, and apostles might ere this have presented the chaste virgin unto Christ. We cannot tell. God knoweth. What is certain is that this blessed consummation can never be attained unless and until the hearts of Christian people are turned to pray for the coming of the Lord, for the resurrection of the dead, for the change of the living, and our gathering together unto Him. This blessed hope God has re-kindled in our hearts. Woe unto us if we let it be extinguished, for then God has no further use for us. We are like the shavings with which men light a fire, valueless in themselves, but useful to carry a flame to the mass that is to be set a burning. Let us take heed to ourselves, therefore, lest at the last moment we be found unready for a further witness. Those to whom the Lord first appeared after His resurrection were bidden by Him to go and tell His brethren. Are we ready, if it should be His pleasure, to see Him now, and to bear His message ? God grant that it may be so.

## HOMILY.

*5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Easter, 1909.*

EPISTLE—JAMES I. 22. GOSPEL—JOHN XVI. 23.

“**A**T that day ye shall ask in My name, and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God.” There can hardly be any doubt that the day of which the Lord here speaks is the day of Pentecost, when by the sending of the promised Comforter the disciples were lifted up into a new relation to Christ, and therefore into a new relation to the Father. At least on that day these words *began* to be fulfilled, whatever deeper, fuller import they may be found to contain hereafter. Among the many wonderful privileges of that new relation the Lord makes mention of one only, *Ye shall ask in My name*. What does this imply? There are many passages in Scripture in which we are bidden to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. In His name alone, that is because of His merits, dare we ever draw near to God. In His name alone, that is by the virtue residing in Him, we receive all needful grace whether for the body or the soul. But here something more, something higher, seems to be intended, or else those strange words, “I say not that I will pray the



Father for you," seem out of place. Is not that which is here intended expressed in those wonderful petitions which the Lord proceeded to offer on behalf of those whom God had given to Him, "That they all may be one, as Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us;" "I in Thee and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one"? Here is set forth the mystery of our union with Christ, yea, of our identification with Him before the Father, as a man identifies himself with his wife, so that she may speak in his name, for that they are one flesh. Thus when the Lord speaks of "asking in His name" He indicates not merely a more powerful argument by which we may obtain boons for ourselves, but such fellowship with Himself that we are lifted up far above self interest into comprehension of the counsels of God, and can ask those things which He desires to fulfil. This holy confidence is what St. John speaks of when he says, "if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us, and if we know that He hear us we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."

Closely connected with this are those other tremendous apostolic sayings, Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. They are different aspects of the same spiritual truth, namely, that we are *complete in Christ*, raised up with Him into heavenly places, enabled in Him to comprehend the

breadth, length, depth and height of God's purpose, and to pray intelligently, Thy will be done. But how hard we find it to remain poised at this giddy altitude. There is still that within us which ever drags us down. We are ever slipping instead of standing firm, and we should fall headlong were we not continually supported by One who is "able to keep us from falling." At the high level of our standing in Christ He says not that He will pray the Father for us, for there we should pray *with* Him. But as it was in answer to His intercession that we are admitted to so wonderful a standing, so He ever liveth to make intercession for us that we may be sustained in that high estate, or be recovered if we fall. "When I said, my foot slippeth, Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." "These things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Nevertheless, our calling is on high. The word to the Church is ever, "Get thee up into the high mountain." Our conversation is in heaven. We may not forsake the rarer atmosphere of the height, or seek our ease in the lower levels of this world. Yet that is what the Church has done. St. James expresses it by a different figure. The Church has heard the word, Seek those things which are above, but has not done it. Instead of continuing to look into the law of liberty, the glorious liberty of the children of God—instead that is of finding in the

Scriptures the picture of what she ought to be and living up to it—she remembers not “the face of her birth,” and has forgotten what manner of creature she was, when God fashioned her in the beginning. Of necessity, therefore, she has become oblivious of her highest privilege, namely, that of asking in Christ’s name not for our personal salvation, but for those far-reaching, all-embracing, unspeakable gifts of God, by which His name is to be glorified and His creatures blessed.

In the work of God by His apostles which we have known, perhaps nothing has marked it more clearly as divine than the recovery of this standpoint, however imperfect that recovery may have been through our infirmity. Let us beware that we do not quit that standpoint because we do not now ask in Christ’s name according to the manner of former days. There is an offering of the incense yet to be fulfilled. No doubt it will be an act of Christ Himself. Whether He will fulfil it by means of those in mortal bodies, or immortal, or both, He only knows. But certainly those who take part in that final act of intercession must be as He was on the night before His passion, forgetful of self, despising the transient shame, full of love to others, entering into the mind of God, May we be such.

## HOMILY

*Fourth Sunday after Pentecost June 7/09*

EPISTLE—I ST. PETER V. 5-11. GOSPEL—ST. LUKE XV. 1-19.

“THERE is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” So we are assured by Him, who came down from heaven, from the bosom of the Father, to seek and to save that which is lost.

Herein is our only certainty about the character of God. His power may be inferred from His works, and indeed these do also witness that He is good, as St. Paul declared to the men of Lystra. But the problem of evil confuses the testimony of the external creation, and the darkened heart of man easily makes mistakes. Heathen poets have pictured their deities in the likeness of human selfishness, reposing in secure enjoyment, indifferent to the fortunes or misfortunes of men. Philosophers have explained God away into a relentless force, ever evolving fresh creations only that they may pass away and perish. But our soul thirsts for a living God; and the only begotten Son, He hath declared Him. Nor does He declare Him by word alone, but also in deed and in truth, for He laid down His life for the sheep, and “this commandment,” He says, “I received of my Father.” Even here man’s

foolish heart finds cause to grumble, and asks complainingly, "Why were the sheep made capable of going astray? Why was sin made possible, and repentance necessary?" One answer is that of St. Paul and Isaiah, "Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why hast Thou made me thus?" Another answer may perhaps be found in this, that a machine is incapable of love, and since the highest, yea, the only blessedness of the creature stands in love, the creature must be free. That we are free we feel: that we have misused our freedom, and gone astray like lost sheep, is only too evident. The blessed fact remains, that the Shepherd of our souls has sought and found us. Can we not rest on His shoulders and suffer Him to bear us home?

This is what St. Peter urges in the Epistle, "Casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you." It is that complete surrender of ourselves to one in whom we have absolute confidence, which you may see in a tired child when its mother takes it up in her arms. "As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you:" such is the word of the Lord by the prophet. And he adds, "ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." We may cast upon God not only all our care about the things of this life, not only all our care about our personal salvation, but also all our care about Jerusalem, the one Catholic church of Christ. How shall God's work of recovery and restoration be carried forward? How shall the

adversary, whose roaring waxes louder and louder be resisted? How shall the blinded eyes be opened, the deaf ears unstopped, the stony hearts melted to tears of repentance and confession? We know not, but He knows, and He will seek all that which is lost, *till He find it.*

Do we desire to be used of God to help our brethren? There is one thing essential, "Be clothed with humility." It is a curious expression that the apostle uses, "Gird yourselves with humility to serve one another." He seems to go back in memory to that last supper when Jesus took a towel and girded Himself, and humbled Himself to wash the disciples' feet. We will not attempt to guess what form of spiritual ministry may be indicated by the Lord's act, to be yet fulfilled in His body, the Church. But more and more are we made to perceive in the Holy Ghost that the keeping of that last supper was a type of the evening of this age, and a shadow of events immediately before us.

"Ye also ought to wash one another's feet." God's present dealings with us may be intended to fit us for such a work of self-denying love. Let us humble ourselves under His mighty hand. He will exalt us in due time, and the time may come sooner than we think.





## HOMILY.

*Sunday after Christmas, December 26th, 1909.*

EPISTLE : HEB. i, 1-12.

GOSPEL : JOHN i, 1-14.

GOD hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son. The meaning is not merely that by the lips of Jesus Christ God has proclaimed the gospel, but by the fact of Christ's appearance God spoke to us as He had never spoken before. Before all worlds, from all eternity, the only-begotten Son was in the bosom of the Father. The Word was ever with God, the true expression of all that is in God. Now that Word of God is *uttered* in terms which men can apprehend. The Word has become *flesh*, and thereby God is declared.

The first and most important point in this declaration respects the nature and being of God Himself. Hitherto men had groped after God in the blindness of their darkened hearts. The power of Godhead they could trace in the wonders of creation, but for the most part they libelled the divine character by fashioning deities in the likeness of their own lusts. Even the chosen race, to whom God revealed Himself as a God of righteousness, seldom caught a glimpse of the truth that the foundation and source

of inflexible righteousness is *love*, nor had they ever understood the word, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." But when in the fulness of time God sent forth His Son, then, as with a gasp of adoring wonder, they that received Him discerned the truth about God's being and character. They found that though God is a Unity He is not a solitude, that Fatherhood is not the mere relation of the Creator to His creatures, which had a beginning and might conceivably have an end, but it is of the very essence of His being; in a word they discovered that God always has been, is and ever shall be, Love.

The next point made clear by the fact of the Incarnation is this, that God loves the creatures which He has made. By the Word all things were made, and He has continued to uphold all things, bearing the universe along toward its appointed destiny in the everlasting arms of His almighty power. But now there is a change. Creation is no longer a thing separable from God, that might be thrown away and dismissed into nothingness, as a child rejects a broken toy; for the Creator has come into it and linked it to Himself. The Word has become flesh, He has taken into His own being that nature which was fashioned of the dust of the earth, and given proof thereby that even the material creation must abide. True, the heavens and the earth may wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture He may fold them up, but it is only that they may be changed. All His works shall for ever

praise Him, for He is the same, His years shall not fail, and He will make all things new.

A deeper note now follows,—“When He had by Himself purged our sins.” The creature which God joins to Himself in the Person of the Eternal Son is no longer pure. It has become tainted, perverted, defiled. Yet He takes it. He does not abhor the Virgin’s womb, though the substance she can supply is nothing but that one human flesh and blood which has been corrupt in every human being since Adam’s fall. It is not corrupt in Him, for He cleanses it by His touch through the Holy Ghost. By the power of the Spirit dwelling in Him He holds it proof against all temptation, pure and undefiled, and then He pays its debt and the debt of all that are partakers of that same flesh and blood. This is not the day to dwell upon the Atonement, but let us never leave it out of our thanksgivings. Understand it perhaps we never shall. The awful necessity of it lies deep in the holiness of God, and only as we approximate to that holiness shall we apprehend the sinfulness of sin and the impossibility that sin should be forgiven without atonement. Yet even now our hearts cry out Amen. Deep as is the mystery, the fact is plain that He whose being makes atonement indispensable Himself provides that which His holiness requires. There is no room for doubt or cavilling. We rejoice in the birth of Him Who saves His people from their sins.

And now He has sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high ; but not for ever. In another place it is said, "from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool"; but even in to-day's epistle the same goal is indicated. "When He again bringeth in the first-born into the world He saith, 'And let all the angels of God worship Him.'" God brought His only begotten Son into the world once at Bethlehem, in secret, in humiliation. He will bring Him into the world again with triumph and acclamation. He will solemnly induct the appointed Heir of all things into His inheritance and give Him the throne of His father David. Oh why are His people, called by His name, so slow of heart? Why do they whose calling is to reign with Him seek to make a kingdom without Him? Why are His priests the last to bring the King back? Why do we make a covenant with His enemy, acquiesce in death, and talk of ending our days in peace? An apostle once complained that all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. Let us see to it that at least in one tiny corner of the Catholic Church a cry may continually be heard, that goeth not out of feigned lips, "Come, Lord Jesu."

## HOMILY.

*Pentecost 1910.*

EPISTLE—EPHESIANS IV. 4-16. GOSPEL—S. JOHN. XIV 15.

ONCE again, in the forenoon service of this feast, we have sung the majestic Pentecostal psalm which declares in marvellous prophetic words the working of the Holy Ghost in the Church, describing its history from the resurrection of Christ until the coming of His eternal kingdom. And now, in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the same psalm has been quoted, though not literally, in the Epistle. For the very centre of the Epistle is likewise the centre of the sixty-eighth psalm. "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, Thou hast received gifts in the man."\* Thus David in this psalm addresses Jehovah, the King of Israel. And in the Epistle St. Paul writes, "When Christ ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men." David, speaking in his song of Jehovah's ascending on high, points to the bringing up of the Ark of the Covenant to Mount Zion. This act was of the greatest importance to all the people of Israel. For now Zion, the royal residence of David, became

\* So in the Hebrew of Ps. lxxviii. 18.



also the dwelling place of Jehovah, so that from that mountain not only temporal, but spiritual blessings also went forth. God ascended on high, after leading captivity captive by helping His servant David to overcome the Jebusites and to take from them the stronghold of Zion. And God received men as gifts, when David set in order Priests and Levites for Jehovah's service in His sanctuary on Zion.\*

David's Son and Lord, our Saviour Jesus Christ, ascended to the height of heaven, after having led captivity captive by breaking the power of darkness through His precious death and glorious resurrection. And the risen and exalted Lord likewise received men as gifts, for His Father gave Him men out of the world to be His peculiar people. And to these elect He gave special gifts in holy ministries, sacraments and ordinances by sending down upon them on the day of Pentecost the promised Comforter. Thus He built His Church, His dwelling place among men, the house of His grace and glory.

Yet His chosen ones did not remain obedient: they became rebellious. This too is prophesied in our Pentecostal Psalm. But "for the rebellious also" Christ has received gifts, and the Lord God will dwell even among them. This is His merciful purpose: this is our trust and salvation. The Lord has never withdrawn the gifts which He bestowed

\* I Chronicles, xvi.

upon His Church in the beginning: His Holy Spirit has never forsaken His temple, though it has been defiled by superstition, will-worship and infidelity. Yea, even in these last days, we have rejoiced in the Lord's returning grace unto His Church, in the reviving of His ordinances and in the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Therefore could His people with all their heart join in the words of David, "Blessed be the Lord, Who loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation." \*

But just after this thanksgiving we find in our festival psalm the little word *Selah*. This word probably denotes a short pause or silence in the psalmody, after which the music of the Levites sounded again but louder. Was there not after the Lord's ascension such a *Selah*, a pause of ten days in which the disciples were to be prepared for the day of Pentecost? But when that day was fully come, then the *Selah* was broken by a grand heavenly music—the sound from on high of a mighty rushing wind and the Apostles speaking with other tongues the wonderful works of God.

As there was this important pause or *Selah* at the beginning of the dispensation, so is it now at the end. This pause, too, shall prepare the people of the Lord for a mighty working of the Holy Ghost, for a fuller manifestation of the Pente-

\* Ps. lxxviii. 19.

costal blessing. For this present Selah, during which we are already for the tenth time celebrating this holy feast, shall also be broken by a marvellous heavenly music when the seven trumpets shall be blown in the land of Immanuel, to wake the sleepers and to proclaim that the "mystery of God shall be finished."\* Then we hope many of the spiritual Israel shall come back from Bashan to Canaan,† passing through the Jordan : they shall go down into the waters of true repentance, and, being washed from their sins, they shall serve the Lord according to His will. Yea, the joyful time shall come when the congregation of all the saints shall enter into the sanctuary of God, "submitting themselves with pieces of silver,"‡ that is to say, worshipping the Lord in thankful and self-sacrificing love.

Remembering this passage of our Pentecostal psalm, let us notice how earnestly the Epistle and the Gospel of the day do also remind us, that only in love can the Church realize her heavenly calling. There is no increase of the Body of Christ unto the edifying of itself, save in love—this we have heard in the last words of our Epistle. And the Gospel tells us that to those who love Jesus, He and the Father will come and make their abode with them. Therefore this should be our most fervent Pentecostal prayer, "O Holy Ghost, which dwellest in us,

\* Rev. x. 7.

† Ps. lxxviii. 22.

‡ Ps. lxxviii. 30.

fill Thou the hearts of Thy faithful people, and kindle within them the fire of Thy love."

Hearts burning with love—this is the precious Pentecostal fruit for which the Lord is longing. Filled with love, the Church is able to manifest itself as One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic; for perfect love leads to true unity, it stimulates to holy works, it imbues with Christ's all-embracing mind, it enables the Church for its mission in this world, to be the messenger and the witness of God to all mankind. Yea, when the love divine dwells in us, our heart will not be troubled even if the Lord command us, "Arise, let us go hence"—hence, from the holy place where hitherto we have eaten our passover to a spiritual Gethsemane and Golgotha.

For we are fully assured that this is the way in which He will lead us and all His Church to that joyful day of Pentecost, when He will pour out of His Spirit upon *all flesh*: when, instead of the silence of the present Selah, the hymns of all creation shall praise Him that sitteth on the throne and the Lamb.

## SERMON.

S. JOHN vii. 37-39 ; iv. 7, 9, 10, 14.

IN the seventh chapter of his Gospel St. John writes, that on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus stood in the temple and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." And St. John adds, "This spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive."

Some time before this, our Lord had spoken to the woman of Samaria, at Jacob's well, saying, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink ; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water," and "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." *If thou knewest* the gift of God, thou wouldest ask for the living water : *if thou knewest* Who it is that speaketh to thee, thou wouldest ask Him to give thee the living water.

There can be no doubt that the gift of God here mentioned is the Holy Ghost, "the treasure of good," "the giver of life." Heartily and most forcibly does the Lord call upon us, and invite us

to come and drink of this well—to receive that living water which alone can quench the thirst for eternal life. If we really know the gift of God, if we have apprehended the glory of this gift, it is impossible that we should not desire it and ask to receive it.

But on both these occasions when our Lord promises to quench the thirst of those who come to Him for living water, He has a word to add. To the woman at Jacob's well He said further, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life": and in the Temple, at the Feast of Tabernacles, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

"As the Scripture hath said." Have then the Scriptures of the Old Covenant spoken of these rivers of living water that shall flow out from the true believers when they have received the "Gift of God"? Certainly not in these exact words. But our Lord does not cleave to the letter; it is the spirit that quickeneth. The words to which He refers must be such as these, in the book of the prophet Isaiah, "The Lord shall satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose "waters fail not":\* and these in the prophecy of Ezekiel, when, concerning the waters issuing from the Temple of God from under the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar, it is said,

\* Isaiah lviii. 11.



“ These waters go into the sea ” (that is the salt sea, the Dead Sea) “ which being brought forth into the sea the waters shall be healed : and it shall come to pass that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live : the waters shall be healed, and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.” \*

Now these words speak prophetically, not only of the time when the rivers of living water shall go forth from Israel, the chosen people of the old covenant, to quicken and heal the vast sea of the Gentile nations, but also of the spiritual Israel, the Church of the firstborn, the temple of the Holy Ghost, from which streams of life and blessing shall flow forth, bringing health and light to Israel and the “ nations of them that are saved.” †

But more than this. We all know how the great works and dealings of God with men begin in small things, in secret places, with a single person or some few persons. Therefore our Lord at the Feast of Tabernacles could point to such words from the Old Testament Scriptures and apply them thus, “ If *any man* thirst, let him come to Me and drink, *he* that believeth on Me out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” For in every member of the Body of Christ, the Holy Ghost will dwell as in a temple, and from each and all shall the river of living water flow for the blessing of the whole body, and of all around us.

\* Ezekiel xlvii. 8, 9.

† Rev. xxi. 24.

Here then is set forth the truth, that whosoever receives the gift of God and drinks of the living water does not receive it merely to quench his own thirst for everlasting life. The object of the Giver is to make each and all instruments for spreading and distributing God's blessings in ever-widening circles.

To Abraham, "the father of all them that believe," \* God Almighty said, "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing." † In the New Covenant the blessings are greater and more glorious, the gift beyond measure more precious, but the thoughts and purposes of God are the same now as of old. Whenever He chooses, teaches, exalts and endows with heavenly gifts a small company or a special people, they must not count His calling and His blessings a prize or a prey which they may keep and store up for their own benefit. Our Lord and Saviour "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," but He emptied Himself for our sake, He gave up His glory "and took upon Him the form of a servant." ‡ "Hereby perceive we love, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. §

But further. When our Lord spoke to the woman at Jacob's well, He not only promised to give the living water to those who ask for it, but

\* Rom. iv. 11.

† Gen. xii. 2.

‡ Phil. ii. 6, 7.

§ 1 John iii. 16.

He also said, "*Give Me to drink.*" "If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, 'Give Me to drink,' thou wouldest have asked of Him." These were His words.

There is then a thirst, even in Him! a thirst which He seeks that we, the children of men, should satisfy.

When, in the midst of His Old Covenant people Israel, in the darkest hour of His life on earth, He suffered upon the cross, this cry broke from His lips, "I thirst." And it is written, they gave Him vinegar to drink. This was man's answer to Him, when in His agony He asked, "Give Me to drink." The answer was symbolical. Long time before, the Holy Ghost through the lips of David had said, "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none: and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My meat, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.\*"

But then, in the New Covenant, has He been comforted and satisfied by us?

We will not speak of individuals. We will not attempt to state how far our Lord may have been comforted and satisfied in many of the members of His Body. Suffice it to say that His words, "He that believeth on Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," contain the most earnest warning and exhortation for every one.

\* Psalm lxix. 20, 21.

No : but we will speak of the whole Church of Christ, upon which both the former and the latter rain (or at least an earnest of the latter rain) have fallen, and we will ask, what has the woman, the chosen bride of Christ, answered, when He turned to her saying, "Give me to drink" ?

May we not say that just as this demand astonished the Samaritan woman, when addressed to her, so it has been with the Church. How is it that Thou askest drink of me ? shall *I* quench Thy thirst ? Surely she has not been prepared for such a demand ! And yet, why should we wonder, if He, Who has given us all we have, Who has given Himself for His Church, should expect her to be ready and willing to quench His thirst ? Alas, our perplexity and our confusion, when He turns to her saying, Give me to drink, cannot be concealed. But there is sufficient reason for it. We have all fallen into the sin of desiring our own benefit, our own welfare. His good gifts we have sought to possess for ourselves alone.

Now the service in which we were yesterday engaged, would seem, for one thing, to show, that although we may not have attained to the "giving Him to drink," yet an acknowledgment of our great failure and confession of our common sin has begun. In the confession appointed for Matins on the Eve of Pentecost, we find these words, "We have not used to Thy glory, the gifts which Thou didst bestow in sending down the Holy Ghost upon

Thy Church," and, "We have not fulfilled the trust which Thou didst commit unto us, that we should call unto the ends of the earth to serve and glorify Thee." The thoughts here indicated are more fully worked out in the humiliations and confessions offered in the Forenoon Service, of which the keynote and summary would seem to be, we have kept Thy good gifts to ourselves, and no rivers of living water have flowed forth from us; we have not given our Lord to drink, nor have we caused the blessings bestowed on us to flow forth to our brethren.

Thus we have all failed; we have all come short of our heavenly calling; and our only comfort is, that there is One Who never hath failed, Who never shall fail. In Him alone do we trust; and to comfort us, He has said that, when He shall come in His glory and sit upon the throne of His glory, He will say to the blessed of His Father, "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink."\* In these glorious and comforting words we have the sure pledge, that, in spite of all failings and shortcomings on our part, yet, at last, the living waters shall break forth, and He shall not for ever be without reward for all His sacrifice of love. The woman, the Church, shall at last give Him to drink.

But here again we meet His incomprehensible love, that love which never seeks its own. For

\* Matt. xxv. 35.

when on that day He shall say, "I was thirsty and ye gave Me to drink," He will add, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."\* Such are the thoughts of His loving heart. If only the rivers of living water flow out from those who have received the "gift of God" for the blessing of their brethren, then He is satisfied. His thirst is quenched. All that He could wish and long for, all that He had the fullest right and reason to seek for Himself, He gives all up for His brethren. When the victory is won, when at last the great end for which He has suffered, longed and waited is attained, He will ask no reward for Himself.

And yet, will He receive nothing given to Him personally? He seeks it not, nor asks it, but will He not accept it? Will not He, Who did not reject or send away the woman who washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, who anointed them with ointment and ceased not to kiss them, because she loved much—will not He accept praise and thanksgiving and worship when offered to Him in love, and in the power of the anointing? Surely, He will receive it and rejoice in it!

How long then shall He have yet to wait before the rivers of living water shall flow out freely? If His unspeakable love cannot move us, if this cannot induce us to give up ourselves and submit to His

\* Matt. xxv. 40.



breaking us as bread for the strengthening of many brethren, what else can do it? Has He not given the anointing for this very object that the whole house may be filled with the odour of the ointment?

But how shall we attain to this? How shall the rivers of living water be made to flow? He alone can do it, and He will do it! He will take us into His holy hands, and gently break us, as the holy bread is broken. And when, in the valley of tears, in the hour of great humiliation, the stream of tears breaks forth, will this not be the source and beginning of that great river for which He so earnestly longs? Then once more shall the words of David be fulfilled, "I am poured out like water, my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels."\*

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."† There has been abundant sowing: more or less in all ages as long as the Church has been in the world, but—the tears? Well, at last they must fall as a blessed rain, and flow forth as a river to refresh God's weary heritage. And all that has been sown and planted in His Name, according to His good will, shall grow and bear fruit.

But it is His doing! From first to last we are without any praise. All is by grace, through faith—and it is the gift of God!

Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!

\* Psalm xxii. 14.

† Psalm cxxvi. 5.





## HOMILY.

*Sexagesima Sunday, 1911.*

EPISTLE—2 COR. xi, 19-31 ; GOSPEL—LUKE viii, 4-15.

THE Sower, the seed, the soil : these are the three main features of the Lord's great parable, which is, as He Himself tells us, the key to all parables.—A sower went out to sow his seed. The Lord says no more about the sower, for He does not magnify Himself. But we will magnify Him, who came forth "in perfect love, from perfect love," that He might accomplish the work of our salvation. The epistle shews us what is ever the sower's experience, whether in Christ personally, or in the servants by whom He acts. It is ever a "sowing in tears." He that goeth forth bearing the precious seed, must always do so weeping, and be made partaker of Christ's sufferings. St. Paul had experience of stripes and imprisonment, of perils and distress, with a constant burden of anxiety. But Christ had still more. The servant must be as his Master. Let us therefore not be cast down, but rather rejoice, casting our burden upon Him who is alive for evermore, knowing that the reaping in joy will come.

The seed is the word of God, the word of the kingdom, as it is expressed in another gospel. No other seed will produce the fruit that God desires. The kingdom of God has been based in righteousness, is developed in holiness, shall be manifested in glory. Here is Christ's three-fold work, the past on the cross, the present from heaven by the Holy Ghost, the future when He comes again. The setting forth of these three things is the gospel, the word of God, the seed that will bear a hundred-fold. Nothing else will avail. Take away any of the three elements, and you sterilize the whole gospel for God's purpose. The devil smiles when he sees men preaching the cross without the coming of the Lord. That is a gospel which leaves the usurer in possession of the earth. Or when they preach a kingdom to be attained by the power of the flesh, without sanctification by the Spirit of God. That is the kingdom which Satan desires, of which he will inspire Antichrist to be the head and ruler. Or, worst of all, when they preach either kingdom or holiness not proceeding from atonement. That is the adversary's masterpiece, for then men tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. St. Paul laments that there were false apostles who preached another Jesus, and another gospel. He would have more cause to lament now. Be it ours to approve ourselves as ministers of God *by the word of truth*, and

to hold fast the one three-fold gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation.

But the work of the Sower and the goodness of the seed may be profitless, if the soil be unkindly. Let us not busy ourselves to find prophetic applications of the parable to others, but use its warnings for ourselves. Are our hearts like the wayside, given up to the traffic of daily life, whether it be in the household, or in business, or even in the church? Are they crushed by the heavy wheels of custom and routine into a hard impenetrable surface, which excludes any thought of another life, so that the word of the kingdom never germinates at all, but lies unheeded till the watchful enemy snatches it away? Well may we pray "that those necessary works wherein we are engaged, whether in the affairs of the Church or of the world, may not prevail to hinder us." Or did we once receive the word with joy, and now that trial has come, now that the course of events has not been such as we expected, now that the heart is sick with hope deferred, now that worldly minded people resent any talk of the Lord's coming, while even religious persons smile at our infatuation, is the root of the gospel withering in our hearts because we lack moisture? Oh, ye pastors of the flocks, where is the doctrine that shall drop as the rain, the sound speech that shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the



grass? Ye are not straitened in God, for He turneth the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters. Ye are not straitened in the apostleship, for Paul verily planted, but has Apollos watered? See that ye be not straitened in your own bowels, lest God's weary heritage cry out, and it be laid to your account that the children are killed with thirst, "not a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."

Once again, are our hearts clean? What farmer expects a good crop from ground that is full of weeds? We may understand all mysteries and all knowledge, but we shall bring forth no fruit to God if we are still making room in our hearts for the lusts of the flesh. Therefore let us cry continually in the words of another collect, "O God to whom all hearts are open, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee." This is the heart's true attainment, that we may perfectly love Him. To this end let us come to His altar and receive the pledges of Christ's love, rejoicing to feel Him near, desiring to see Him soon.

## HOMILY.

*First Sunday in Quadragesima, 1911.*

EPISTLE—2 COR. vi, 1-10; GOSPEL—MATT. iv, 1-11.

IT is difficult, perhaps impossible, for us to apprehend that our adorable Lord could be tempted.

But it is a consolation, because it shows us that, in our own case, to be tempted is not sin.

A blind man is not tempted by things which he sees, nor a deaf man by things which he hears. But as our powers are enlarged, temptation increases.

It was so with our Lord. He had just received, on His baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost for His ministry. Now He had the ability to work miracles, and immediately it was made an occasion of temptation to Him.

And these things are related as helps to us, and to all His people.

To turn stones into bread; to create food in a time of utter exhaustion. As if we were to say,

we must ordain priests and consecrate angels, or the Lord's work will come to an end.

To cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple without any command, and leave God to bring it right.

As if we had said, we must leave our place, we must elect apostles, or God's work will fail.

As for the third temptation, to accept the kingdom from the prince of this world, that is a temptation which has beset our Lord's followers many times, and has overcome them too often.

But let us observe that for the Lord Jesus it was a real temptation.

He knew better than any one the faults of kingdoms : He must have known. One of a subject race, in a dependent province of a vast empire, He had experience of the follies and mistakes of human governments. He knew the unintentional cruelties that come through sheer stupidity, the enormous burdens caused by mere forgetfulness or neglect. He knew Himself to be the destined ruler. He could not say, as we might, " Well, if I do not do it, some one else will do it quite as well." No one could do it as well. He alone had, in perfection, the intelligent sympathy, which is the mainspring of successful rule.

How often have His followers taken power wrongly, that they might use it rightly : have

thought that to do a great right, they might do a little wrong.

Not so our Lord. On the contrary, it was the one temptation which he instantly and indignantly repelled. "Get thee hence, Satan." With such a thought He could not for a moment dally.

Our Lord must have told His disciples something of His temptation : otherwise the gospels could not have been written. Since they were written, they have warned men to take nothing before the time. But was there ever a period when the warning could have more force, than in the half hour of silence, when the one thing which He says to all His servants is, *Wait?*



## HOMILY.

*16th Sunday after Pentecost, 1911.*

GAL. vi. 11 ; MATT. vi. 24.

“**G**OD forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” When the same apostle writes to the Corinthians that he determined not to know anything among them save Jesus Christ crucified, because they were not spiritual but carnal, even babes in Christ, it might seem as if the word of the cross belonged to those first principles of the doctrine of Christ which spiritual men of full age have to leave in order to go on unto perfection. And in one sense it is true that this is the first lesson which a man must learn, who will come to God. It is true that this is the A B C of faith. It is true that the gospel of the cross is only half of the gospel, the other half being the gospel of the kingdom ; so that it is to mutilate the truth if nothing but the cross is preached. The same apostle writes to the Romans, “Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God.” But can even the most learned scholar dispense with the A B C ? Can



he write a single line without it? Even so is the word of the cross only half the gospel indeed, but the first half, without which the second half could not be thought of. There shall walk for ever and ever in the light of the new Jerusalem the nations of the saved, who never came into a covenant with God, who never received baptism or sealing. But could they have been saved without the cross? And as to us, who stand in the new covenant with God, what happened when we were baptised? We were baptised into His death; our old man was crucified with Him, and only by the power of His cross are we able to keep daily our flesh crucified with the affections and lusts. And whenever we have sinned (and who is there that sins not?) what could we do to escape everlasting damnation if we had not the cross of Christ? On the cross we not only learn our own utter and hopeless unworthiness, but at the same time the greatness of God's love towards us, as we never could learn it by any other means; yea, God commends His love toward us, that while we were yet ungodly sinners Christ died for us.

But this is not only a matter for individuals. From the very beginning the Church has built her houses of worship in the form of a cross, thereby confessing that her only right and title for approaching and serving the most holy Lord God is by the cross of the Saviour. And again, putting the cross on the top of her buildings, she acknow-

ledges that her only hope to be lifted up from the earth and to meet her Lord in the air, is again by His cross. And in the meantime almost no benediction is given without the sign of the cross, in token that all blessings flow from the cross of the Lord.

The cross of Christ, a child may embrace it, but apostles and prophets never shall get at the bottom of its contents, the depth of its horrors and the depth of its blessedness. It is quite true that God has chosen the Church in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. But this election would, in consequence of our sin, not have been valid, not have been carried out, unless Christ had bought the Church by the blood of His cross, Himself being the Saviour, not only of the world, but of His body also. Likewise it is written about the 144,000, this election amongst the election, that they are *redeemed* from among men to be first-fruits unto God and the Lamb. Redeemed by what? There is no other price of redemption but the blood of Christ. What are we doing in this holy service? We shew forth His death. We present before God the body and blood of Christ, even as He Himself appears before God in the heavens as the Lamb as it had been slain, and we beseech God to have respect unto His sacrifice and satisfaction on the cross, and for the sake of the same, for nothing else, to grant to the Church and to other men the remission of all sins and eternal life. This we do

until He come, and we look day by day for His coming. But are we ready? Who may abide the day of His coming and who shall stand when He appears? There is no other readiness save in His blood; stand in it! When He sees His mark on you, He will recognise you as belonging to His jewels. As we say on All Saints' day, "through His Blood an entrance is administered abundantly to all believers into the everlasting kingdom, the heavenly Jerusalem, the glorious assembly of the saints," wherefore for ever and ever their song shall rise, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!"

What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things, meat and raiment for this life, food and a new body for the life to come! So approach His holy altar, and let the words wherewith the meat of immortality is administered unto you sink deep into your hearts, "Given for thee, shed for thee," and thank Him for His unspeakable love. Amen.

## HOMILY.

*20th Sunday after Pentecost, 22nd October, 1911.*

EPISTLE—EPH. IV. 17; GOSPEL—MATT. IX. 1-8.

SON, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee. Our Lord's words go to the root of the matter. The sick man and his friends were seeking his deliverance from bodily suffering. Jesus speaks of the forgiveness of sins. His name was called Jesus because He should save His people from their sins. We have no right to suppose that the palsy which afflicted this poor man was the immediate result of his own sins, but all disease, all death, in man is ultimately due to that estrangement of man from God, of which sin is the root; and the putting forth of God's healing power presupposes repentance and forgiveness.

But what is sin? There was a clever man of the last century who is reported to have said, "There is no such thing as sin, there are only mistakes." Only mistakes! Then Christ died in vain. We all make mistakes, and sometimes we suffer for them keenly, when we see how foolish we have been. But mistakes do not leave upon the

heart a burden of guilt, nor stifle us with a sense of defilement. These are the fruit of sin, for sin is rebellion against God, an offence against holiness, an outrage against love. We may and do sin against our fellow man, and we may feel remorse for it; but behind this lies the deeper terror of God's broken law. David sinned horribly against Uriah the Hittite. But when his eyes are opened, and he stands convicted of adultery and murder, then his horror-stricken conscience cries out, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God." And none but God can deliver either from the consequences of sin, or from sin itself, its defilement and guilt. That he might deliver us, Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Christ died for our sins, through Him the forgiveness of sins is preached.

We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. At the outset of our spiritual life, God meets us with the precious blood of Christ, that our hearts may be sprinkled from an evil conscience. It is not His desire that we should ever know the burden of sin, for Christ has borne it for us. God brings us to the laver of regeneration, He washes us, so that we put off the old man, which is corrupt, and put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and holiness of truth. He would have us keep our garments, and be ever free from defilement, daily renewed in the spirit of

our mind, that we may be clean every whit. Happy are they who have been taught from infancy to be of good cheer, because their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake ; who have been wont to come to God in daily prayer, not indeed deceiving themselves by saying we have no sin, but humbly, meekly, confidently asking that our Father will forgive and put away all that in our ignorance or frailty we have done amiss. Happy are those households where the blood is daily sprinkled upon the lintel and door-posts, as among Israel of old, by family prayer, that entrance may be barred to the destroyer. Happy are the congregations of the faithful, where God's children come boldly, yet with holy awe, to feed upon Christ's life-giving body and His cleansing blood.

Alas, that anything further should be needed, but it is needed too often. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not," but there are, and ever have been, sad cases in which those who have been baptized into Christ give place to the devil, and fall from that state of grace. Yet still it remains true, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But in such cases there is need of special ministration. The sinner may be palsied, tied and bound by the chain of his sins, longing yet unable to find his way to Jesus. Then the ministers of Christ must help their fellow sinner by their faith. They



must overcome all obstacles, and not rest till the word can be spoken, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

Does not the whole Christian Church need such a word? Have we not all erred and strayed like lost sheep? Is not the whole body full of wounds and bruises and putrifying sores? What sins are there to be compared to the sins that have dishonoured the holy name by which Christians are called? Yet He has not cast off His people. He waits to be gracious. He says, "Come and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow." The High Priest has entered within the veil with His own blood. Its virtue is not exhausted. Still it cleanseth from *all* sin. Only let there be a broken and a contrite heart, that looks in penitence to Him. May God work in the Catholic Church such true repentance. Then the veil shall be lifted, the High Priest shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation, and they that look for Him shall hear the word of absolution, "Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven."

## HOMILY.

*1st Sunday after Circumcision, January 7th, 1912.*

WE are still within the double octave, wherein the Church commemorates the Incarnation, Nativity, and Circumcision of our Lord.

Throughout this period the whole of the great "mystery of godliness" is brought before us; even the manifestation of the Son of God under the form, and in the true nature, of man. We cannot separate between the Divine and the human elements in our Lord's incarnation; between the mighty Creator, and the feeble creature; the eternal Son, and the infant born in time; the Almighty and most glorious Lord God, and the babe of Bethlehem; nor can we meditate exclusively upon any single point of the revealed purpose of God in the creation, redemption, and salvation of mankind, and of this earth; for all these are parts of one eternal scheme of unerring wisdom, and of infinite love. And here is the key which opens the mystery of the kingdom of heaven to all believers. It is Love. God *so* loved that He gave. It is an attribute of God to *give*. He created the world. He gave life and being to every creature. And when, by disobedience, man had fallen from Him—so far from leaving him to perish—God gave His own Son to redeem all mankind. "We were sinners doomed to die, Jesus paid the penalty."

For in this great gift of God's love, all the three Persons in the Godhead co-operated. The Father gave up His well-beloved Son. The Son emptied Himself of His divine glory. He was made man, and became subject for ever to the limitations of creaturehood. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, who sustained Him throughout His life on earth. Thus, in taking our nature upon Him, Jesus expelled all evil from His mortal flesh; and, by the same Spirit, He kept it pure. But He did far more than this. For He delivered it from its bondage to sin and Satan. He held His body at God's service—a living sacrifice. He was the truly circumcised man. Upheld by the Spirit, He walked circumspectly, redeeming all His time on earth. He avoided the philosophy and traditions of men; for He knew what was in man. He set a perfect example to all men of what every man should be—both Godward and manward. The Law had waited for Him, and He fulfilled it. And see where God has placed Him! For, when He had become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, then God highly exalted Him. He gave Him back—alive for evermore—to mankind. He made Him a Prince—a Saviour, to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. And the faith of the Church is that He shall yet once more be given, to take His great power, and reign; and to bring in His universal kingdom of blessedness and peace, of which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

Too many, alas, even of those baptised into Christ, do not thank God for the gift of His Son. They turn God's holy day into a mere holiday of feasting and merry-making. But to keep Christmas *without Christ* is to grasp an empty casket, bereft of its jewel! Others will not accept Jesus as God has given Him to us—as He is set before us in Holy Scripture—and as He is preached by His apostles. But each one chooses his own doctrine, and sets up his own saviour, whom he worships regardless of God's will and purpose in giving Him to us. Were St. Paul among us to-day, would he not have again to cry, "Beware"?

But we, dear brethren, have not so learned Christ—we have accepted the gift of God's Son. We believe in His incarnation: and our faith in it is corroborated by the fact of His circumcision, which we are commemorating. Unto us God has vouchsafed the adoption of sons, and the true circumcision of the spirit. Jesus has become our Example, though, if His work had stopped there, He must have remained alone for ever. But to as many as received Him He still gives power to *follow* in His steps. And while we cannot serve God by nature, yet, by grace, He can serve Himself of us. For the Son of God became the Son of man that we, the sons of men, might become the sons of God. And this He effects by forming Himself *in* us. And now the time is drawing near when He would have those whom He has thus conformed to His image, to shine forth with Him in

His Father's kingdom. Therefore He seeks to *perfect* in them the true circumcision of the spirit, even entire obedience in all things to the will of God. In this time of silence He causes them to feel the sharp knife in their whole being—spirit, and soul, and body. Which of us has not felt it during these ten years of silent waiting? Yet, shrink not back from the Divine surgery, even if, perchance, He should call upon us—as He did upon Abraham—to resign to Him the beloved person or thing that we most highly value, and deem to be quite indispensable. It is for detachment from the world and the flesh, with its affections and lusts. It is for setting the children of the kingdom free from *all* external things (even though these were given for our help and comfort here below), yea, and from ordinances of Divine appointment. Nothing less than *exclusive* consecration to the service of God is required of us now : and we believe that when this shall have been accomplished in each and all, *then* the Lord will lead His people forward. Till then, He gathers us around His table to feed on Himself in this holy sacrament of His body and blood. For Christianity is a life. It is an *operation* of God in all who believe. And they who eat the flesh of the Son of man, and who drink His blood, are being surely conformed to His image ; and will verily be found to be *like* Him, at His appearing, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

## HOMILY.

*Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, 1912.*

EPISTLE—I PETER iii. 8-16 ; GOSPEL—LUKE v. 1-11.

THE present phase of the Lord's work may well be likened unto the procedure that is narrated to us in the Gospel of this day by the words, " But the fishermen were gone out of the ships and were washing their nets."

The Lord spake once unto the multitude in parables, and one of them ran, " The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind " (Matt. xiii. 47).

When, at the day of Pentecost, after Peter's sermon, about three thousand souls were added unto the disciples, the beginning of the fulfilment of this parable became apparent, and every church, built up by the instrumentality of the Lord's apostles, was such a net for the purpose of gathering men into the communion of the Church. All those who love their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, are constrained by the love of Christ to bear witness of His wonderful work of redemption in order that



their brethren may receive the heavenly benefits thereof.

As the sea contains not only fish, but also seaweeds, the nets very often get dirty, yea, sometimes they even break, as we hear in to-day's gospel. Therefore, fishermen have very often to be busy with washing and mending their nets, and if they do not do so, they will not catch much fish.

Next Sunday it will be seventy-seven years since the Lord separated His last apostles and sent them into His inheritance, in order that they might gather and seal His first-fruits, whom He had elected to be instruments of grace for the blessing of His whole Church. The churches under apostles were the nets by which they performed their commission, and the Lord blessed and prospered their work. But eleven years ago the time came, when by the withdrawing of the last surviving apostle this work came to a standstill. It may be that the full number of the Lord's first-fruits was then gathered in, but we are sure that there was also another reason for that standstill, namely, the necessity of cleansing and mending the nets, which then began and is not yet finished.

The constant occupation of the churches with bearing witness to their brethren, and gathering in those who received the Lord's apostles in faith, hindered them—although it ought not to have been so—from attaining to the full measure of their calling concerning worship and sanctification, yea,

from keeping fast a true catholic attitude of heart. Therefore, the time of silence had to come, and came. The bearing of testimony ceased, and was restricted to that being ready always to give an answer to every man "that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us," whereof we hear in the epistle of this day. All our time could now be dedicated to searching and purifying our hearts, yea, to that reasonable service of presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, answering to the service at the laver and at the altar of burnt-offering.

This present time of washing and mending is a great blessing and is of the greatest importance, for we are thereby—both everyone of us as an individual, and all of us as a company of first-fruits—prepared for the coming of the Lord, that we might be vessels, yea, *one* vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Simon's washed nets were meet for their Master's use, for inclosing a great multitude of fishes. We do not know whether the churches under apostles will be used for the gathering of the great multitude of their brethren, or whether the Lord will use other instruments for that purpose. We will no longer speculate about the things to come, but leave the further development of His work to the Lord Himself, who is the eternal Wisdom, wonderful in counsel and excellent in

working. The chief matter is, that we be meet for the Master's use, howsoever He may choose to use us.

In the epistle, St. Peter shows us the way in which the churches become meet for the Master's use, and describes to us the condition in which they are fit to be nets for catching men. "Be ye all of one mind," is his first admonition. The first condition for the usefulness of a net is, that it is whole. Its meshes must be well connected with each other. Likewise we must be endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, the unity not only of those members of the body of Christ, whom we see and know, but of all members of the living and the departed. The gathering in of our brethren must never be done in a sectarian spirit, but in a true catholic attitude of heart.

All the other admonitions of St. Peter evidently set forth before our eyes Jesus Christ and His qualities, which He manifested during His life here upon earth. In Him was to be found true compassion, true love, true pitifulness, true courteousness. He did not render evil for evil, or railing for railing, but the only desire of His heart was to be a blessing for His people.

These last years have taught us how much we have failed to be followers and imitators of Christ, and how little we have manifested of His all embracing love and goodness. But in spite of this knowledge of our many shortcomings, we have still

to confess, "Thou knowest, O God, our weakness, and our frailty is not hid from Thee."

But let us not forget that our Lord and Saviour has not only been set forth before our eyes, but that we also have died with Him, and are risen with Him; that He is in us, the hope of glory, yea, that He, who hath begun a good work in us, will perform it until His day.

The sure foundation of this, our hope and confidence, is our Lord's death upon the cross, which we are about to show forth in this holy sacrifice of thanksgiving, and on the ground of which we are imploring with Him, our heavenly Head, God's mercy, grace and blessing upon us and upon all His people.

And He fulfils the desire of them that fear Him, He prepares His table for us, filling us with the finest of the wheat, His holy body and His most precious blood. Thereby He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength, making them vessels for the Master's use.

# SERMON.

## PEREZ-UZZAH.

**D**URING the last month we have been reading the two books of Chronicles.

In the 13th chapter of 1 Chronicles, we read how David sought to bring the ark of God to the City of David. And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab, and Uzzah and Ahio drave the cart. And when they came unto the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzzah put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and He smote him because he put his hand to the ark; and there he died before God. And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?

And, as you know, David did not bring up the ark of God till later, when he had learned that it ought to be borne on the shoulders of the Levites.

God is not less jealous about the spiritual realities of the Church, than He was about the furniture of the earthly sanctuary.

He will not have men putting forth their hand to touch sacred things. They may do it with the best intentions, as Uzzah did, putting forth his hand to hold the ark when the oxen stumbled.

But for all that the wrath of God will break forth upon them.

It was a short journey to bring up the ark from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem. It has been a journey of eighteen centuries through which the Christian Church has passed. Again and again in that long period men have stretched forth their hands to touch the sacred things of the Church. Always with the idea of helping, of putting things right. But that does not prevent the wrath of God from breaking forth upon them. We will take only three instances.

Three hundred years after the birth of Christ, the Roman Emperor Constantine adopted Christianity. Till that time persecution had kept the Church pure. Now they were to be not persecuted, but patronized.

The oxen were stumbling. There being no apostles, bishop was in conflict with bishop even upon matters of faith. Therefore they encouraged the Emperor to hold the council of Nicæa, at which he presided, though as yet an unbaptized man, (for he was not baptized till his deathbed). They brought in therefore the power of the Emperor to settle the doctrine of the Church, and to direct her affairs; and the power of the State in one form or another has prevailed ever since.

Seven hundred years after Constantine came Hildebrand, whom they made Pope under the title of Gregory VII. He it was who carried out



unflinchingly the doctrine that none of the clergy should be allowed to marry. Protestant writers have denounced him for denying the sanctity of family life, and for the consequent spread of immorality.

But why did he do it? The oxen were stumbling; the ark was likely to fall. That is why he put out his hand. Men were giving landed property to the Church. If priests and bishops had families, the land would become family property. A son would succeed his father in his sacred office, as he did in worldly possessions. Already in Germany the three great archbishoprics of Cologne, Mainz and Treves were tending to become earthly principalities.

Hildebrand stopped that. At what cost of sin and evil, who can say?

Seven hundred years after Hildebrand, brings us to the eighteenth century. In our own country it was a time of spiritual deadness: the period of the Church in Sardis, which hath a name that she liveth and is dead. It was, no doubt, a time of spiritual deadness throughout Christendom. But we can see it very forcibly in our own land of England, where bishops and leaders of thought seemed to dread nothing so much as what they called "enthusiasm."

Then, about 1740, God raised up in England three men, through whom was brought about a spiritual revival. Those men were John Wesley,

his brother Charles, and their acquaintance, George Whitefield. They did not appoint themselves; they were regularly ordained clergymen of the Church of England. For years they avoided separation. And they were evidently used of the Holy Ghost to quicken spiritual life in the Church, and they brought thousands and thousands of persons to know that their sins were 'put away through the blood of Christ. The ark might be on a cart instead of being carried on the Levites' shoulders: but it was evidently going forward. And then once more the hand was stretched forth to touch the ark, with the result which might have been expected.

That is to say, when he was an old man, past eighty, John Wesley was persuaded that he must do something to render the work permanent. And he took in hand to ordain persons to preach and to minister the sacraments. He took upon him, that is, the authority of a bishop, or rather of an apostle. As a consequence he left behind him a "great Denomination," a great wound in the Body of Christ; which the greater it is, and the more spiritual it is, so much the greater hindrance is it to the purpose of God.

We have taken three instances; if we had knowledge enough, we might have taken three hundred: instances in which a hand has been put forth to touch the ark of God, and the result has been *Death!*

We too have been engaged in a work of God, in which we may be exposed to spiritual temptation. Our brethren expected us to elect apostles.

Only a week ago, in a railway carriage, a man told me that he supposed our work must end, as the apostles were dead. I said that it was no business of mine, but that the Lord would do what he saw to be best.

Hitherto, perhaps, we have been in no great danger of stretching out our hand: because we never have had an idea that apostles *could* be elected.

But the danger is not quite over. Things get weaker. Scarcely a period of six months passes by without some valuable minister being removed by death.

Let us settle it in our minds that it is the Lord's work; that He must do it, because nobody else can; and *let us leave it to Him.*





## HOMILY.

*Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, 1912.*

EPISTLE—I COR. i. 4-8; GOSPEL—MATT. xxii. 34.

THE two incidents recorded in the gospel to-day illustrate the true use and value of the holy scriptures. This use and value are summed up in the epistle by one brief expression, THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST.

On a previous occasion the Lord had said to the Jews, "Search the scriptures, they testify of Me." This, indeed, is the only purpose for which God caused the holy scriptures to be written. They were not written to teach us science, or history, or philosophy, or the arts of civilisation, but to testify of Christ. He that reads the scriptures, and does not find Christ therein set forth, reads them to no purpose. Unhappily, this was too much the case with the Jews. The Lord had already been obliged to say to them, Ye think that in the scriptures ye have eternal life, and ye will not come to Me of whom they testify.

And so, when this lawyer, whose business it was to study the scriptures, tries to discuss them



with the Lord, one single question is enough to show that he had read the scriptures with a veil upon his heart, and had not discovered the testimony of Christ.

That Christ should be of the seed of David according to the flesh, the lawyer knew well enough. He knew the prophecy of Isaiah about the Rod out of the stem of Jesse, about the Child that should be born, of the increase of whose government there should be no end upon the throne of David. But the names given to that Child by the prophet, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, these had failed to teach him that Christ must be more than man.

And in like manner the verse of the psalm, which our Lord quotes, had never suggested the thought that if the Holy Ghost speaks of Christ as David's Lord, He must be the Son of God as well as Son of man. So easy is it to be familiar with the scriptures and yet to be unconscious of their plainest lessons. So needful is it, even for the most faithful, that God should open their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

We live in a day when the scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments are studied with a microscopic carefulness, almost equal to that of the Jewish lawyers. Criticisms, commentaries, expositions, are poured from the press by scholars and divines in

never ending profusion. But is the result that the testimony of Christ is confirmed? Alas, too often we see that the labours of the modern scribes are directed to prove that the testimony of Christ is a fable; that though Jesus may have been David's son, He never was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, and that He is not now sitting at God's right hand.

But without dwelling on such forms of open unbelief, we may ask, Where among Christian people has there been any adequate appreciation of that little word "till"? Sit Thou on My right hand *till* I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. In other words, where is that waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ which the apostle says is the fruit of the testimony of Christ?

The blindness of the Christian Church has been as gross and wonderful as that of the Jewish. The New Testament is as full of the coming of the Lord as the Old. Yet that coming has been forgotten or explained away, with all the less excuse because we have seen the fulfilment of the scriptures in His first coming, and ought to have profited by the Jews' example. God is long-suffering towards His people, not willing that any should perish, and has sought these many years to open their eyes and to revive the one hope in their hearts. It has been our blessedness and joy to embrace the revived hope of the Lord's coming. Let us take care that we do

not begin to say, "the Lord delayeth His coming." To have hoped in the past will not avail. We must hope *to the end* for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We are not indeed alone in waiting for the Lord's coming. The Spirit of God is working in every part of the one Church and moving many hearts to pray fervently, if ignorantly, Come, Lord Jesus. This very day and to-morrow, as we are informed, many Christian people in this and other lands, have agreed together to offer prayer that He may come.

Let us join our prayers to theirs, and let us take heed to ourselves lest after all, with all the light we have had upon the scriptures, His coming should take us unawares. How, where, to whom shall He first be revealed? We can only say, to them who are waiting.

## THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

*A Sermon preached at Albury on Christmas Day,  
1912.*

WHEN the wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, they asked, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" When, thirty years later, He whom the wise men sought stood before the Roman judge, and it was demanded of Him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" He answered, "My kingdom is not of this world." Here are two aspects, opposite but not contradictory, of the kingdom of Christ. Their perfect harmony and their full significance are to be found in the great fact which we are joyfully celebrating before God to-day.

These two aspects of the kingdom of Christ may be distinguished as the earthly and the heavenly. King of the Jews is a title which implies the sovereignty of an earthly nation. And Jesus was indeed born King of the Jews. When the angel Gabriel brought God's message to the Virgin Mary, and told her of the Son whom she should bring forth, he added, "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever." Our Lord did not ever reject the titles, Son of David, King of the

Jews, or that which they imply. When the multitude shouted, "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh in the name of the Lord, He accepted the application of the words to Himself. When Pilate asked Him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" He assented, though He sought to prevent a misunderstanding of the truth. Nor were His following words any contradiction. When He says, "My kingdom is not *of* this world," He does not say that His kingdom shall not be *over* this world, and exercised thereon. To that end, indeed, and for nothing else was the world created, that it might be the scene of Christ's kingdom. And it shall surely come to pass. Every word spoken by the prophets shall be fulfilled, literally, visibly, gloriously. God's King shall reign in righteousness over all the earth; all nations shall call Him blessed. And it is as King of the Jews that He will reign. The title placed in scorn upon the cross shall command universal homage. "They shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it." Nothing is more clearly declared in the Scriptures than this visible kingdom of Christ upon the earth, and in the New Testament not less than in the Old. Christ's own words are clear and express, and cannot be explained away without doing violence either to the historical record, or to faith. The words of all the apostles and other writers of the New Testament are not less plain. It is a strange perversity in modern criticism which

sets St. Peter in opposition to St. Paul, and finds rival gospels in the preaching to the circumcision and the preaching to the uncircumcision.

Yet it is true, as already said, that besides the earthly and visible there is another aspect of the kingdom of Christ. That kingdom has its heavenly, spiritual, and as yet invisible side. The earthly and visible kingdom belongs wholly to the future, and is still the subject of prophecy. The invisible kingdom is a present though imperfect reality. It exists not in the external region of political organizations, but in the hearts of those who have believed in Christ. Its laws and statutes are not written on tables of stone nor enforced by any outward coercion. Its subjects are bound together not by the geographical limitations of an earthly country, nor only by the mutual interests of an organized society, but by a common relation to Christ. And that relation is not merely the relation of disciples to their Master. It does not look to Christ only in the past and seek to follow the teachings of a departed leader. It is a present though invisible relation, a relation not of mere allegiance but of life. "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Thus the Church is the kingdom in a mystery, a spiritual constitution wherein Christ should rule and His will be done. God hath translated us, says the apostle, into the kingdom of His dear Son. But again the solemn words apply, "My kingdom is not of this world." All the mischief that has



come to pass in the Church may be traced to the forgetting of this foundation principle. The Church is not of the earth, earthy. Her origin is from heaven. Her destiny is not limited to earth, though the earth is included therein. And the present mission of the Church is neither to rule this world nor to settle down in it as one of its permanent institutions, but to pass through it as a stranger and pilgrim, doing good indeed to all men as opportunity may be found, holding up the lamp of God's truth to lighten the present darkness, but, above all, testifying to small and great, both by word and deed and by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, that here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come, that there shall be new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

But that which is here said concerning the Church is true of her because it is first and in a higher degree true of Christ Himself. He who said, "My kingdom is not of this world," said also concerning those whom He was training for that kingdom, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." The Church is the kingdom in a mystery because in Christ Himself, in His Person, there was already a manifestation of the kingdom of God. In Him, in His Person, was seen the perfect rule of God, and the perfect obedience of the creature. In Him was seen Manhood, free and unconstrained, but with the human will ever held in absolute submission to the will of God. In



Him was seen perfect self-surrender, complete unselfishness, humble acquiescence in God's every appointment. He stood not upon His own dignity. He asserted not His rights. He never used His own personal Divine powers to fill up the weakness of His human nature, but He waited upon God and upon God's ordinances ; He was ever led and empowered by the Holy Ghost. From earthly parents He received a child's instruction ; from the doctors of the law He learned what they could teach. From the rites of the temple, and from the holy Scriptures He obtained light upon His own work. From the chosen forerunner He accepted the baptism of repentance and the call to be the Lamb of God. Throughout His ministry He sought God's guidance by continual prayer, and watched for every providential indication of God's will. When at last the hour of trial came, and He was confronted in the path of obedience by the hideous apparition of the Cross, then still, not indeed without agony but without wavering, He persevered. "Not My will but Thine be done." This is the true foundation of the kingdom of heaven, even obedience unto death. A man has been found in whom God's will is supreme, who has held every faculty of human nature, of spirit, soul and body, in unswerving harmony with God's requirements. Such an one is fit to be God's King, whom He will set over all the works of His hands.

It was surely in such a sense as this that our

Lord said to the Pharisees, The kingdom of God is within you, or rather *in the midst of you*. The words are often quoted as if they were the statement of a general law that the kingdom of God means only a spiritual condition of the heart. Whether the words are even capable of such a meaning may be doubted, but certainly the supposed general law is not true. As certainly, the kingdom of God was not then within the Pharisees to whom the words were addressed, but it was embodied in Jesus who stood before them. The kingdom of God had come upon them unawares in His Person, and had escaped their observation. He was in the world, and the world knew Him not.

Nevertheless, it remains ever true that He was not of the world. Though He was and is perfect Man, though He has taken to Himself and for ever subsists in the entirety of that nature which was partly fashioned from the dust of the earth, yet His origin is not of the earth or of this world at all. "For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven." The only-begotten Son which was in the bosom of the Father came forth into the world. Human thought cannot grasp, human imagination cannot picture what such words imply, yet the bare fact asserted may be grasped, however little understood. Beyond the world of human experience, outside all worlds of which man can conceive, there is the all-transcending being of God, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, yet

who has His chosen dwelling-place for the manifestation of His glory. From the unspeakable glory of such a region the Son of God came down, and was born in the truth of our nature as on this blessed day. In Him the law of the kingdom is manifested and fulfilled, namely, Before honour is humility, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The still future kingdom of blessedness and peace may indeed be said to be an expansion of the Incarnation. Not that the creature ever can cease to be distinct from the Creator, but in the dispensation of the fulness of times God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him. In Christ is the point of union between God and all creatures. Through Him all creatures must be linked to God, not all in the same relation, but all in blessed relations to Him, and therefore to one another, so that all with one consent may ascribe praise to Him who was cradled in Bethlehem, and who sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Only one thing must never be forgotten. He who is now crowned with glory and honour once wore a crown of thorns. His hands still shew the wounds with which He was wounded in the house of His friends. The creation that is linked to Christ has not attained that consummation by peaceful evolution, or by any inherent power of its own. Failure and ruin have been its history, and from outside the world

deliverance has come. Therefore the song of praise is not only "Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created," but also, "Thou hast redeemed us by Thy blood, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

Brethren, we live in a day when unbelief is bold to deny that there is or can be anything beyond that visible creation of which our senses have experience ; when men pay honour indeed to Christ, but only as the noblest product of this world, whose memory may stimulate, but whose future kingdom is a fable. May God defend us from such snares ; and that we may be defended, let us to-day and always rejoice to glorify Him, who, being true God of God, was as on this day born of a Virgin, very Man, and shall come the second time to take His great power and reign.

## HOMILY.

*Feast of Presentation, February 2nd, 1913.*

EPISTLE—MAL. iii. 1-5 ; GOSPEL—LUKE ii. 22-40.

NOTHING that God has ordained is more honourable than motherhood. Yet this holy function was marred before ever it was exercised. The woman destined to be the mother of all living wanted to be wise too soon, and was deceived. She gained knowledge indeed, but therewith bitterness, and the sentence on motherhood: *In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.*

Yet how wonderful are God's compensations. If through woman's folly came the curse, by a woman's faith came the Saviour. To-day we contemplate motherhood in its highest, holiest example. A pure Virgin presents her first-born Son, that holy thing which is called the Son of God.

But His holiness is not derived from His mother. He is not sanctified by her, but she by Him. This is testified by her offerings. Like

every mother under the law, she brings a burnt offering and a sin offering. By the latter she confesses that she, like every other child of Adam, can only be accepted in virtue of Another's propitiation. By the former she testifies that the flesh is ever unprofitable, and there is need of a new creation. She is, indeed, too poor to bring a lamb for her burnt offering. Too poor! We think of the word sent to the Church in Smyrna, "I know thy poverty, but thou art rich." How well they fit this case. Mary can bring no lamb for herself, but she brings God's Lamb for the world, that priceless Lamb the sprinkling of whose blood makes atonement for all sin, whose life is given up for God, who is wholly consumed by the fire of God's love, who is raised by the power of God to newness of life, and made the beginning of God's creation.

All this, however, lay in the future. Mary's act of presentation had nothing priestly about it. Not yet as the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world, but as the first-born of His mother, Christ was presented in the temple in substance of our flesh. Yet this fact contained a deep spiritual reality, a means whereby we receive the grace of God, and a pledge to assure us thereof. For the dedication of the first-born was ordained when God brought Israel out of Egypt. That house of bondage was the type of the mortal condition of all flesh, of that bondage



of corruption under which the whole creation groans, and we too groan, waiting for the redemption of our body. Well then, into this house of bondage God Himself has come. Christ is presented *in substance of our flesh*. It is a fact, not a figure nor a fiction. He has heard the groaning of the prisoners. Like Moses He has come forth from the King's house to visit His brethren, not as a prince to visit a prison, but as a prisoner to share the captivity. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, yea even in our dungeon. Sinless and spotless He was indeed, but though God took care that His holy One should not see corruption, yet He felt the bondage. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." How He longed to accomplish His exodus from Egypt, His change from mortality to incorruption. And at last it was done. God did not leave His soul in Hell. The dungeon was burst open, and the First-born from the dead ascended up to heaven, and was presented faultless before the presence of God's glory.

But He is not satisfied yet. He is not like that faithless officer of Pharaoh who forgot the brother he had left in the prison house, He is not ashamed to call us brethren, His prayer is still "I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am." He longs to be able to say in the presence



of God and of the holy angels "Behold I and the children which God hath given Me."

When shall the church of the first-born be presented with her Lord? Oh, let us pray that even now He may accomplish His work as a refiner and purifier of silver, that His love may be perfected in us and in all our brethren Let us pray that the consolation of Israel may come, the long promised redemption achieved; that our eyes may at length see God's salvation; not that we may depart in peace, but that we may ever be with the Lord.

## HOMILY.

*11th Sunday after Pentecost. 27th July, 1913.*

EPISTLE—I Cor. xii. 1-11. GOSPEL—Luke xix. 41.

**T**WICE we are told in the gospels that the Lord wept; once at the grave of Lazarus, a second time at His last entry into Jerusalem. The words used to describe the Lord's weeping on these two occasions are not the same. At the grave of Lazarus He shed tears, as a man may do who still maintains his composure. He groaned in the spirit, yet He restrained His feelings. But when He gazed upon the faithless city He gave way to grief, and sobbed aloud.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was and is true Man. His thoughts, words and deeds, His emotions, both of joy and grief, were such as are proper to man. And they were all *real*. There was no pretence or make-believe. But He was and is also true God. And we must take care that we do not unconsciously fall into the old heresy and think of Him as if He were two persons, as if at one moment He spoke and acted as man only, and at another moment as

God only. Not so. He ever spake and acted as Man. He does so still. But He who thus spake and acted, yea and suffered, in modes proper to manhood, is God, Almighty God. There is *one* God. Though the eternal Son and the Holy Spirit have special personal functions, yet, as the epistle for the day reminds us, their actings are the actings of the One God which worketh all in all. Thus when we see the Lord Jesus Christ weeping, what is that we really behold? We behold the grief of the One Eternal Almighty God over human suffering and human sin. Say not that the Divine nature is incapable of passions. What do we know about the Divine nature, save that which is revealed in the Person of the Man Christ Jesus? And assuredly *His* human passions express something which lies deep in the being of God, His grief is the expression of a Divine compassion.

Yet the heart of man is ever too apt to doubt and cavil. Some of the Jews said, "Could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" Even Martha and Mary in the anguish of their wounded hearts almost reproached Him. "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." With such perplexities of the heart the Lord deals very gently. But now unbelief is bolder, and dares to arraign God openly with the impious dilemma, "Either He is not kind or He is not almighty."

What answer shall we give in the presence of human suffering? The understanding can give none at present, for the simple reason that we do not yet know all the facts. When we know even as also we are known, then perhaps we shall understand. Meanwhile the heart can answer, "Jesus wept." "We have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." "God doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." And in like case to that of Martha and Mary we can be more confident than they, because we know, as they did not then, Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, and we can pray, as they could not, "Hasten, O God, the time."

There remains the more awful mystery of sin. Whence does it come, why was it allowed? Again the understanding is paralysed and dumb. We quail because of the wrath against sin which is revealed. Yes, but before wrath there is compassion. Jesus wept over the city that rejected Him. God sorrows over every sinner. The Son of God hath suffered for sins, that He might deliver us from the wrath to come. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The Holy Ghost teaches us that this sorrow of the Lord over Jerusalem finds its counterpart now, in His grief over His church and the judgments that are impending. He calls us to the fellowship

of Christ's sufferings, that the Lord may not now, as on the Mount of Olives, be alone in His sorrow, but may find some disciples to weep with Him. It is hard to apprehend, still harder to express, what such a call implies. Perhaps some words in the service of Good Friday come nearest to it. "Grant us to have such abhorrence of all evil that we also may have sympathy with Thee in Thy sorrow ; give to us such willingness of spirit, strength of heart and patient quietness that we may not shrink from drinking of Thy cup, nor from being baptized with Thy baptism." This seems to be the burden of the present time. Let us seek to bear the burden of the Lord, according to our measure, *in the Holy Ghost*. Let us learn to weep with Him in true spiritual sympathy. Then "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

## SERMON

*Preached at Albury on Christmas Day, 1914.*

*"On earth peace, good will toward men."—LUKE ii. 14.*

WITH what mournful irony does the song of the heavenly host fall on our ears to-day. Peace on earth. The words sound like a mockery. The tumult of war is heard throughout the world. Even on this land, where through God's mercy, not for our deserts, we have so long dwelt securely, there is now the stain of blood. And not in one spot alone, but far and wide the horror of war is felt. How many homes are desolate, how many families bereaved! How many hearts are torn with daily anguish for fear of evil tidings! The words of the prophet come home to us with a strange significance. "All joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone." Which of us could bear to speak of a merry Christmas? Since then earthly festivity is impossible, let us the more earnestly betake ourselves to the contemplation of heavenly things. Let us seek comfort and instruction in the blessed fact which we celebrate to-day, which stands in the midst of troubles, like a rock steadfast and unmovable, our refuge and strength.

"Unto us a child is born." This is the fact. That Child has two names, both given to Him by

God, both revealed from heaven before His birth. The one is Emmanuel, the other Jesus. The one reveals the truth of His Person, the other describes His work. Together they are the pledge that there *shall be* peace on earth, that there *is* good will toward men.

Man was made for communion with God ; and of this, when his soul is not utterly darkened, man has an instinctive perception. His heart says, "It is good for me to draw near to God;" but at once comes the re-action in the bitter cry, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him." It is no comfort to say that God is everywhere. He is so, no doubt, but what avails that to me who have no capacity to discern Him ? His eternal power and Godhead may indeed be understood by the things that He has made. The heavens do declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. But the very grandeur and majesty of the external creation only oppress man's heart, if God be not otherwise revealed also. "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained,—what is man" ? And if this was felt long ago, when man's mind had no measure by which he could estimate the tiny proportions of man himself and the earth his habitation, how much more now, when science has made us conscious of infinitudes in space and time which appal the imagination, and crush man's aching spirit with their insufferable vastness. Not by searching into His works can we find out God.



“Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Him.” Nor is the case better if we turn from the contemplation of God’s power to think of His awful holiness. Equally true it remains that “with God is terrible majesty.” “Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?” is the question that rises in the heart of the natural man. “Woe is me, for I am undone,” was the cry even of the chosen prophet when he saw the vision of the King upon His throne, and heard the cry of the seraphim, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts. How then shall man draw near to God, how shall he have communion with his Maker? The simple shepherds may supply the answer. “Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.”

We enter a stable and behold a Babe, true flesh and blood though not of flesh begotten. There is nothing terrible here. It is a peaceful, tender sight, about which we cannot be mistaken. We can see with our eyes that this is no phantom. We look upon Him, and our hands may handle Him, and make sure that He has flesh and bones as we have. He is dandled on His mother’s knees, He is nourished at her breast, He is dependent on her care. He is truly Man. And in the holy Gospels we may see this Babe grow up, first to boyhood, then to the stature, bodily, mental, and spiritual of perfect Man, according to mortal conditions. His experience of life is not different from ours. He knows our limitations, our needs, our trials, our

sorrows. He is not solitary or inaccessible, but delights in human companionship. Children are not afraid of Him. He does not strive nor cry. He seeks nothing for Himself. He goes about doing good. Once when He entered Jerusalem the city was moved, saying, Who is this? The multitudes answered, This is the prophet of Nazareth. But we to whom the gospel has been preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, we answer with boldness of faith, This is God, Almighty God, Eternal God, the only true God. [For there is One God, not three Gods, and in the Person of the Word the One God became flesh and was born into the world as on this day.] He by whom all things were made came into the world, and "tabernacled" among men. And this tabernacling is not a temporary expedient for a transient purpose. It is not a mere episode in God's revelation of Himself, which passes and gives place to something of another kind. The *mode* of His tabernacling is changed indeed, because the flesh which the Eternal Word assumed has been brought up from conditions of mortality to the condition of immortality and incorruption. But the Word has not ceased to be flesh. He is as truly Man now as when He was upon His mother's breasts, or when He hung upon the cross. And in Manhood He will ever exercise all power, might, and dominion, through the Holy Ghost dwelling in Him as Man. When He was on earth He said to His disciples, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

This remains true. There is no way of seeing God save in the face of the Man Christ Jesus. When shall I come and appear before God, said the Psalmist. We answer, when His prayer is fulfilled, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." This is the desire of Him who is Emmanuel, God with us, whose delights are with the sons of men. Shall it not be our desire and prayer also?

We turn to His name Jesus. [Good will toward men is already certified by the name Emmanuel. No other motive is conceivable that might induce Almighty God to make Himself of no reputation and to take upon Him the form of a servant. But there are degrees in love, and the measure of God's love is this, that Jesus died. His name was called Jesus, because He should save His people from their sins. And how does He save them? We answer, first by dying *for* them, secondly by enabling them to die in Him, that so they may also live with Him. There have been times when it was very necessary to remind Christian people that salvation does not merely mean the pardon of iniquity and escape from the wrath to come, but that it also means deliverance from sin itself, from its defilement and its power. [To effect such deliverance was part of the work for which the Holy Ghost was sent down at Pentecost from the risen and ascended Saviour.] By the working of the Holy Ghost within us we are made conformable to Christ's death.

The Spirit of Christ would work in us, according to our measure, that abhorrence of sin, that acquiescence in God's sentence against it, that broken and contrite heart, which were in Jesus our Lord. Then we are sacramentally but truly made partakers of His death and of His resurrection. And herein there is room and need for somewhat on our part, for it depends on us whether we receive the grace of God in vain. But all these blessed operations of the Holy Ghost within us depend upon and are the consequence of something antecedent, something which is wholly external to us, and in which we have no part at all. Christ died for our sins. We did not die for our own sins, though we are made dead to sin in Him. We are reconciled to God, that is, we are brought into a position in which God can extend favour to us, not by any operation of the Holy Ghost in us, but by the death of God's Son. He is the propitiation for our sins. He gave Himself a ransom for all. Such words are of course imperfect, and the shallow logic of the mere understanding may easily pervert them to blasphemous conclusions. Analysis of Christ's atonement is at once impossible and profane. But on some points the Scriptures leave no doubt. Christ's atoning sacrifice is a vicarious sacrifice, yet it is wholly a work of love, the love of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. There will be no peace on earth unless men enter into that peace with God which Jesus made, not by converting us, but "through the blood of His cross."

If, however, the cross of Jesus is the Alpha of the gospel, the Omega is His throne. If the cross be the spring and fountain of peace, as it surely is, yet peace will never be extended to the earth like a flowing stream till He that was crucified reigns, and reigns on earth. When the Child born as on this day, the Prince of Peace, shall have the throne of David, then of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end. And this is the one hope preached by the gospel. "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, *then* (not before) shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." "Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and He shall send Jesus Christ." "We wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus." "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him." "We shall reign on the earth." The whole New Testament is one echo of the same strain. What terrible blindness, what wonderful infatuation it is which has come upon Christian people, that they have forgotten the one hope of their calling. Death has been substituted for the Coming of the Lord. The gospel has been modified to be an instrument of civilization for the improvement of this present world, instead of being preached as God's instrument for bringing in the world to come. Pious people still dream that their modified Christianity shall convert the world before Christ comes, while impious men assert more and more loudly, that if only



Christianity could be got out of the way and culture substituted, the world's ills might soon be remedied. Both ideas are false, both unhappily agree in excluding Christ.

When we think on these things can we wonder at the calamities that are now coming on the earth, or that peace is taken from it? The wonder is not that God's judgments have come, but that they have been so long delayed. There is a terrible indictment against Christendom, and it has three counts ; Christ's coming again ignored, Christ's atoning sacrifice disparaged, Christ's Godhead denied. "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid. Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord."

Oh may God's present chastisement yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. May the eyes of all faithful people in every part of the one church of Christ be opened and their hearts touched. May we all humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and confess the sins by which we have provoked Him. May prayer be heard, prayer that goeth not out of feigned lips, united prayer, beseeching God to send the Deliverer. In answer to such prayer another word spoken by angels shall be fulfilled, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner." Then, never before, there will be peace on earth.

## HOMILY.

*23rd Sunday after Pentecost, 31st Oct., 1915.*

EPISTLE—PHIL. i, 3-11 ; GOSPEL, MATT. xviii, 21.

THE “door of faith” which leads to salvation turns on two mighty hinges. The one is the Forgiveness of sins, the other the Resurrection of the body. These two cardinal points are set forth in the Apostles’ Creed as the alpha and omega of the communion of saints, of that fellowship in the gospel for which the apostle gives thanks in to-day’s epistle. If either be displaced the door will not move freely, entrance into the Kingdom will not be “ministered abundantly.” If both be done away, the door may remain shut.

At the present time Christendom is staggering under the judgment of God, and men’s hearts are failing them for fear. Those who have not altogether forgotten God are asking in affright, Is then Christianity a failure? It is a terrible thing to answer, Yes; and yet we cannot unreservedly answer, No. Assuredly the gospel of Christ is not a failure, but the gospel of Christ has not been allowed free course. An adulterated article, mis-called Christianity, has been substituted for it. In this the hope of the resurrection has been long



lacking, the kingdom of heaven is reduced to terms of earthly civilisation, the attainment of holiness is relinquished in favour of material comfort, and now, worst sign of all, the cleansing of the conscience is ignored, the idea of guilt is ridiculed, the need of forgiveness is denied.

This is the hidden reason of the evils that are come upon Christian nations. The Lord's parable in to-day's gospel points to the remedy. Spoken to teach us the duty of forgiving others, it teaches us also about God's forgiveness of ourselves. "A certain king would take account of his servants." But this is just what God is very slow to do. The Psalmist cries, Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. Such is also the cry of every heart touched by the Spirit of God. We do well to pray "Deal not with us after our sins, neither reward us after our iniquities." For, "If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" The servant in the parable asked for time, "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all." In the lips of a sinner, such a petition were vain, nay, insolent. All eternity would not suffice for us to pay the smallest fraction of our debt. We can never, never make any real atonement for sin. It can be done by God alone. And He has done it. The king in the parable did not merely exercise forbearance and give time. He loosed the servant and forgave him the debt. Even so God, having

long exhibited His forbearance in the passing over the sins of many generations, did in the fulness of time send His Son in the truth of our flesh to be the propitiation for our sins. In Him, says the apostle, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. Where this gospel is received, the inference will follow, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Where this gospel is rejected, men will be found implacable, unmerciful, hateful and hating one another.

Of course there may be degrees in sin, just as the parable speaks of great and small debts. Not that any man can dispense with God's forgiveness through Christ, but some may need more forgiveness than others. Who are they that will need to be forgiven most? Are they not those who have been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, and yet have not walked worthy of their vocation? Let us, on behalf of ourselves and of all our brethren in Christ, fall down and beseech God, that He may yet renew us unto repentance; and may the fruit thereof be that those to whom much has been forgiven may love much.



# THE PRIESTHOOD AND KINGSHIP OF CHRIST.

*Day after Ascension, May 18, 1917.*

NOTE.—The following discourse was not preached from the pulpit, but was delivered in a private meeting of ministers. It is intended chiefly for the use of ministers and not for general circulation.

PSALM CX., 1, 4.

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. . . . The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

THE application of this Psalm to our Lord Jesus Christ is guaranteed to us by His own authority. The silence of the Pharisees when He quoted the Psalm to them is evidence that they and the Jews generally regarded it as prophetic of the Messiah. No psalm is more frequently quoted or alluded to in the New Testament, and the first and fourth verses are constantly referred to as finding a fulfilment in the Ascension of our Lord into heaven and His session at the right hand of God. The double character in which the Lord was enthroned on high is carefully expounded in the Epistle to the Hebrews under the type of Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God. The writer quotes not only the psalm we are considering but also the second, the eighth and the forty-fifth, in order to show that He who has ascended into heaven is none other than God's own Son, begotten before all worlds, made lower than the angels for our salvation, declared

in manhood to be the Son of God with power by resurrection from the dead, now invested with a priesthood higher than that of Aaron, recognised as the Man whom God would set over the works of His hands, anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, crowned with glory and honour, set down with His Father in His throne.

The anointing here spoken of can refer to nothing else than that plenary unlimited endowment with the Spirit which St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, declared that Christ received at His ascension. "Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." And the concluding words of the apostle's address seem to indicate that he regarded this anointing with the Spirit as the solemn consecration of the Son of Man to the offices of King and Priest. "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Here however we must call to mind that, in his subsequent discourse to Cornelius, St. Peter speaks of another anointing, which the Lord had received while He was on earth. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." These words plainly refer to the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Jesus immediately after His baptism by John. That endowment with the Spirit was no doubt a token and earnest of the larger gift which Jesus should receive at His exaltation into heaven. For mortal flesh, even the spotless flesh of the Lamb of God, could not contain the fulness of the heavenly gift. There was a true sense in which "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." But, further, the object or intent of the first anointing at the Jordan was not exactly the same as that of the fuller endowment bestowed upon the Risen Saviour. By the latter He was anointed for the offices of Priest and King. In the former He received His equipment for the ministry to be fulfilled on earth, which was rather the

ministry of Prophet. As Jesus Himself declared in the synagogue at Nazareth, He was then anointed "to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." All this belonged to the prophetic office of the former dispensation, and to this office the Prophet like unto Moses confined Himself in all His ministry towards the people generally. When that ministry was generally rejected, He did indeed give to the few who received Him instruction of a deeper kind, and opened to them the mysteries of the Kingdom. But still there is no assumption of kingly or priestly functions. A single exception to this statement in each kind may perhaps be traced in the gospels, but the exception is of the sort that proves the rule. When the Lord made His entry into Jerusalem, riding on an ass in fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy, He suffered the multitude to cry unrebuked, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord." But when the Jews accused Him of speaking against Cæsar and making Himself a king, it was obvious even to Pilate that the charge was wholly false. The other apparent exception has more reality. On the night before He suffered Jesus instituted the holy memorial of His Passion, the pledge of the new covenant. And thereupon, His sacrifice being now consummated so far as His own will and self-surrender were concerned, He rises in spirit into the heavenly region and offers to God His great priestly prayer of Intercession for His Church. It is an anticipation for one moment of the office proper to the new dispensation, when the Crucified One should be anointed High Priest in heaven.

It was at His Ascension then that the Lord entered personally and fully upon the exercise of His office as High-priest. His entrance into heaven itself, the true holiest of all, His appearing in the presence of God for us, was the complete fulfilment of the Aaronic type; complete at least in every point



but one: for at the end of the Day of Atonement the High Priest came forth from the tabernacle to present the evening offering, and so we look for the Saviour to appear the second time unto them that look for Him, and present to Himself a glorious Church. But the Aaronic type gives way to and is merged in that of Melchizedek. This priesthood is received not by succession from others, but directly from God. It passeth not from one to another, but is exercised by Him alone, whether in His own Person or in the persons of those who are joined to Him in the Holy Ghost as members of His Body. Its main functions are unending intercession for them that come unto God by Him, continual blessing of the faithful, as Melchizedek blessed Abraham, and ministration of heavenly food for the heavenly life. For surely it is lawful to see in the bread and wine which Melchizedek brought forth, a shadow of that holy ordinance in which Christ gives us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink, that we may live by Him.

There can, therefore, be no doubt that, according to the Scriptures, Christ is now exercising the office of Priest to which He was anointed at His Ascension. The question comes next to be asked,—Do the Scriptures teach that Christ is also now exercising the office of King? Has He in any true and real sense assumed the sceptre and begun to reign? To many devout persons the question will come with a certain shock of surprise, or even of pain. For it has become so customary in our hymns and devotions to think and speak of Christ as our King, that to raise the question whether He is yet reigning may seem almost profane. And no doubt there is a sense in which He is reigning already. Thus in some of the Collects we use such words as these: “through the merits of Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee (the Father) in the unity of the Holy Ghost” etc. But manifestly the sovereignty here spoken of is that which belongs to Christ in the indivisible unity of the Godhead. It is not that kingship which the Father bestows upon the Incarnate Son, as predicted in the words “Yet have I set my king upon my

holy hill of Zion." Again, there is a very true sense in which we Christians recognise and worship Christ as *our* King. He is so indeed. To Him we belong, to Him we have sworn allegiance, for His service alone we live, His glory is our one desire. But this proves nothing as to the question whether the glorified Son of Man is exercising His kingly office at present. The point may be illustrated by a reference to our English history. In the time of Cromwell there were many in England who looked to the absent Prince Charles as their king. To them he was King of England *jure divino*. For him they were ready to lay down their lives. We admire their devotion. But surely it would be a misuse of language to say that Prince Charles was actually reigning in England during his exile, because the Cavaliers were loyal to him. If anyone chooses to say that he was reigning in their hearts, there is no objection. Only the expression is metaphorical, and reigning in the hearts of a few chosen followers is not the same thing as sitting on the throne of the country and administering the affairs of the realm. And so, when it is said in a treatise on the Resurrection of the Lord, "the fulness of that kingly office which our Lord exercises on our behalf begins with His Resurrection,"\* it seems to us a misuse of language, and we feel constrained to ask, Where do the Scriptures ever speak of our Lord as exercising any kingly office at all between His ascension into heaven and His coming again to the earth?

There are only two passages in the epistles in which this word King is used with reference to God or Christ, viz., I. Tim. i. 17 and vi. 15, and it seems certain that in both the reference is to the Father, not to the Incarnate Son. No doubt in the Book of the Revelation, the title King of Kings and Lord of Lords is applied to Christ, but clearly the visions in which it is so applied set forth an epoch which is still future. Even now it is true that all authority in heaven and

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\* The Resurrection of our Lord, by Professor Milligan, p. 150.

earth is given to Christ, but He has not yet assumed the power commensurate to that authority, nor begun to exercise it as King. The time in the development of God's purpose at which He will do so is indicated in Rev. xi. 15, at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which we suppose to be identical with the "last trump" spoken of by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. Then there is a voice of thanksgiving in heaven "because Thou hast taken to Thee thy great power and didst reign" (Rev. xi. 17, R.V.). Can words more clearly indicate a new departure? Not till then does the kingdom of the world actually become our Lord's and His Christ's. Not till then is the answer given to the petition "Thy Kingdom come."

The point is by no means one of speculative interest only, but has a very practical bearing upon the position and duty of the whole church on earth during this present dispensation. When our Lord Jesus Christ was set at God's right hand in the heavenly places, St. Paul teaches us that God not only put all things under His feet, but also gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His Body (Eph. i. 22). The plain meaning of the apostle is that all the rule and authority and power and dominion which were conferred upon Christ at His Ascension were conferred on Him in His official capacity (if we may so speak) as Head of His Church. The offices to which He was then anointed are to be exercised by Him through the instrumentality of His Body, the Church. By the Church He makes known the manifold wisdom of God, by the Church He preaches the unsearchable riches of Christ, and blesses us with all spiritual blessings. And if it be true that Christ is now exercising His Kingly office, then it is by the Church that He must do so. The inference is inevitable, that if Christ be actually reigning the Church ought to be reigning too. And this inference has been drawn with fatal but unimpeachable logic, in the Papal claim to be the Vicar of Christ and to receive as such the homage and submission of all Christian Kings. But the minor premiss is not true. Christ

Himself is not yet exercising kingly functions. He is like the nobleman in His own parable, who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, *and to return* (Luke xix, 12). When He returns He will sit as King, and His servants will reign with Him. Meanwhile their commission is something quite different. They are to use the treasure with which He has endowed them to make gain for Him. "Occupy till I come." So when the Lord was about to leave the world He said to His apostles, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and . . . make disciples." He did not say Go and rule. He has received the kingdom, but He has not yet returned. And so "we see not yet all things put under Him." He is still "expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." We, too, by virtue of our union with Him, have "received a kingdom that cannot be moved." But we may not anticipate Him in the exercise of it. He spoke the parable referred to because the disciples "thought the Kingdom of God should immediately *appear*." We have fallen into the converse error, and have forgotten that the Kingdom of God *shall* visibly appear on earth, but not till the King appear Himself.

The Papal claim above mentioned has not been expressly sanctioned in other divisions of the Church on earth. Yet in them, the idea that Christ is even now exercising His Kingly office has produced some erroneous theories, though happily these have not always been carried out to their logical consequences. In England the union of Church and State was formerly regarded as a fundamental principle of the realm. The phrase may be capable of a sound interpretation, but it may also hide a serious fallacy. If it be supposed that the ministers of the Church and the authorities of the State stand on a like footing before God, and that Christ acts equally by means of both, fulfilling His priestly functions by the Church and His Kingly functions by the State, the error is grave and far-reaching. The truth is that, strictly speaking, the authorities in the State, whether King or President, judges or

magistrates, are not ministers of *Christ* at all. They are indeed ministers of *God*, but that is a very different matter. St. Paul brings out the distinction very clearly in the Epistle to the Romans (ch. xiii.), and St. Peter teaches the same truth in his first epistle (1 Pet. ii. 13-17). It is important to note that both apostles are referring to a heathen emperor and his subordinates, and St. Peter to an emperor who was beginning to persecute the church. Yet this makes no difference. The powers that be are really ordained of God, though they may be ignorant of God and even opposing Him. Christians are nevertheless to submit themselves to God's ordinance, and if they should suffer on account of their faith they are to account themselves happy. Their relation to Christ does not release them from obedience to the civil authorities; for the Church, though "an holy nation" in her heavenly relationship to Christ, has no *national* existence on the earth, and her members are in no way discharged from the duties of earthly citizenship in the particular political organisation wherein each man's lot may be cast. But our point is to make clear that the rulers in a modern state (whether kings or others) do not reign as officers of Christ, or by His commission. They may be believers in Christ, they may be members of Christ. As such they have a relation and a responsibility to Christ similar to that of all other believers. But in their places of earthly rule they do not represent Christ, nor act as His instruments. They are the instruments of God the Father, Who still orders by His providence the government of the earth, whether the rulers in each nation have attained their position by conquest or by hereditary succession or by popular election; and they are successors to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, in that commission which God gave to him first among the Gentiles, which commission covers all the kingdoms indicated in the vision of the great image (Dan. ii.), until the day when Christ shall come in His glory and establish His throne upon the earth. We are far from denying that Christian governors may and should reign



“ by the grace of God,” and this in a double sense. They rule by God’s permission and by the disposition of His providence, but, like every believing man, they should also continually seek and obtain from God that grace which every man needs in order to do his duty in that state of life unto which it may have pleased God to call him. This grace, of course, is ministered to every man from Christ through the ordinances of His Church. But the ministration of grace is not the same thing as the conferring of authority. ¶ No earthly ruler receives his authority through the Church, and therefore the Church, as such, has no right whatever to interfere in matters political.\* Individually Christian men and Christian ministers have (or should have) the same political rights as other citizens. But corporately the function of the Church is only to teach those principles which are revealed in the gospel of Christ, and to minister the grace by which men may be enabled to order their lives according to those principles. Happy are those rulers, happy are those nations that endeavour sincerely to do so. God will assuredly meet them and bless them according to their faith. Yet it is vain to ignore the fact that the task of applying Christian principles to national institutions and political organisations is, under present conditions, one of enormous difficulty and complexity. For while the Christian ruler or State is entrusted by God with the power of the sword, yet that power may never be used to propagate or defend the faith of Christ. It is “ for the punishment of evil doers,” not for the repression of heresy or the coercion of infidels. “ That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty,” is the whole end of civil government as instituted by God. To preserve good order and tranquillity, to restrain oppression and violence, to administer impartial

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\* It is equally true that the State has no right to interfere in the spiritual matters of the Church. Possibly the State would never have done so, if the Church had never claimed political influence and territorial jurisdiction.



justice to all men, to defend against aggression by external enemies, these are the functions of civil rulers. No doubt, when the faith of Christ is professed by any nation generally and recognised by its laws and institutions, it would be the duty both of rulers and subjects to endeavour that the affairs of the nation may be ordered, as far as possible, according to the principles of the gospel. *As far as possible.* For "all men have not faith," and civil rulers have no commission from God to coerce men into faith (or the pretence of it) by civil pains and penalties. If, for example, men and women who do not believe refuse to have their marriages sanctified by Christ through the ministry of His Church, it may be a question whether it can be the duty of the ruler to force them into a hypocritical observance of a holy rite by refusing legal validity to a marriage otherwise contracted. Similarly it is a very difficult question how far it may be right to enforce the teaching of religion in State-ordered education, or how far it may be right to enforce observance of the Lord's Day. But, on the other hand, there must be a limit to the tolerance of rulers and the liberty of individuals, or human society could not exist. If "unreasonable and wicked men" will "use liberty as a cloke of maliciousness," and seek so to assert their individual freedom as to threaten the welfare or peace of the realm; or if they insist that because of their own unbelief the whole nation shall cease by any corporate act to recognise or profess the faith of Christ; then they cannot justly complain if their fellow citizens refuse to de-Christianize themselves or the nation at their bidding, nor if they be left to suffer the inconveniences that are really the result of their own attitude.

Christian rulers then, and Christian nations, must apply the principles of the gospel to state or national affairs, according to the light that God gives them. To Him alone they are responsible. But the question may now be asked, Though Christian rulers hold no commission from Christ, though Christian nations are not as such part and parcel of

Christ's Kingdom at present, have they, therefore, no relation to Christ beyond that of individual believers? Are they without any relation or responsibility to Him in what we may call their official or corporate capacity? We answer, No, indeed. They certainly have a relation to Christ. It is a relation analogous to the relation of the Levitical priesthood to the then future priesthood of Christ. Christian rulers and kingdoms are types and shadows of the future reign and Kingdom of Christ upon the earth. Nay, they are more than a type. They are a symbol of the present fact that God's King is already anointed and commissioned in heaven, and a pledge of the future certainty that God will send Him, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, to execute His commission, when all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him. And the safety of Christian kings and nations lies in this, that they not only believe in Christ as the Saviour of souls, or even as the Resurrection and the Life, but that they also understand that they do but occupy their thrones till He comes, and that they be prepared to welcome Him as "Prince of the kings of the earth," when He shall return, having received the Kingdom, and shall sit upon the throne of His glory.

Unhappily, most unhappily, it is precisely at this point that the Christian Church has most grievously failed in faithful testimony for Christ. The gospel which the Church was commissioned to preach consists of three parts, Christ's past work on the cross, Christ's present work from heaven, Christ's future work on earth when He shall come to reign. That Christian minister who ignores, explains away or denies the third part is an unfaithful steward; and very heavy is the load of responsibility in this behalf which has accumulated upon the collective Christian ministry ever since the days of the apostle John. Faithful men there have been, no doubt, in every generation, but it remains sadly true that in the whole Church on earth there has been an adulterating of the word of God (2 Cor. ii. 17, iv. 2), and the very thing against which

St. Paul warned the Colossians has come to pass; we are "moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Col. i. 23.). This appears very plainly in another prevalent theory concerning Christ's Kingdom, which, like those already discussed, proceeds upon the fallacious assumption that Christ is already reigning. Those who maintain this theory start from the hypothesis that the Kingdom of Christ on earth foretold in Scripture is already constituted, and only needs to be extended. They proceed by an interpretation of the parable of the leaven, which we must regard as wholly erroneous, to assume as guaranteed by Scripture the "final complete triumph of the Gospel—that it will diffuse itself through all nations, and purify and ennoble all life." We quote the words of Archbishop Trench,\* who in the same context expresses the opinion that a triumph of Christianity was achieved when "the whole structure of Roman society had gone to pieces and the new Teutonic framework had been erected in its room." One cannot help wondering what the Archbishop would have thought if he could have seen some present developments of that Teutonic framework. But he and the men of his day, while cherishing the theory of the gradual and peaceful triumph of the gospel, and the absorption of all nations within the pale of the Christian church, nevertheless never dreamed of denying the doctrine of the Lord's Coming as declared in the New Testament. We may wonder how they could reconcile their theory with the plain declarations of Scripture concerning the manner of the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on earth; how, for example, they could quote as a pledge of the success of missionary efforts the words of the Psalm, "Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," and yet quietly ignore the verse following, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash

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\* Notes on the Parables; Parable iv., p. 122.

them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Again, we may be astonished that they did not perceive that the Church was never intended by God to comprehend all the nations of the saved, but is an election out of all nations for a special purpose, and that the ancient house of Israel will be the missionaries by whom the nations at large will ultimately be converted. Lastly, we may wonder (not without trembling) at the blindness which has caused so many devout Christian people to ignore the warnings of Scripture concerning the apostasy of the last days (which means an apostasy in the Church), and the plain intimations that the end of this Christian dispensation will be a revolt against God and Christ more frightful than any which the earth has seen yet, from which the only ultimate escape for the faithful will be in the fulfilment of the long-forgotten hope of the "Coming of the Lord and our gathering together unto Him." The fact remains that in former generations these parts of Scripture were tacitly accepted, but the practical import of them was disregarded. In the present day there is a change. Men are more logical and less tolerant of vagueness or indecision. One result is that when the declarations of Scripture are seen to be incompatible with accepted theories respecting the progress of the world, these declarations are rejected. Thus large portions of Scripture concerning the Coming of the Lord, the gathering of the Church to Him, the rise of Antichrist and his destruction by the manifestation of the Lord's Coming, are dismissed to the category of "Jewish fables," and we find an eminent divine teaching that Christ "is seated on the right hand of God. He is come. There is no different coming."\*

A word may be said here to meet the difficulty felt by some who suppose that to think of failure or apostasy in connection with the Church is a contradiction to the Lord's promise that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against His Church, and

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\* The Kingdom of God, by the Rev. W. Temple, p. 36.

that all must be well, because otherwise God's design would have failed. Such persons should study the tenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. No doubt God's design in the Church will ultimately find a glorious fulfilment. So also will His design in the literal Israel. Yet the history of the literal Israel has proved the sadly accurate type of the history of the Church on earth, and the transgression of neither the one nor the other can be ignored on the principle that "whatever is, is right." It was not of God's good pleasure that Israel "despised the pleasant land," or that the Church forgot "the hope of her calling." It was not of God that the people "were mingled among the heathen and learned their works," or that the Church became conformed to this world and practically merged in it, causing a ferment in the earthly thing if you will, but powerless to turn that earthly thing into "a new lump," and itself losing to a terrible extent the consciousness of the heavenly citizenship and the savour of the heavenly life.

One consequence of the erroneous theories about Christ's kingdom and reign, which we have endeavoured to refute, is that Christian men do not perceive the significance of the terrible events now happening in the world. The present war has swept away, or at least shaken, many social and political theories. It does not yet seem to have produced in the hearts of the godly a consciousness of the spiritual sins which have provoked such a judgment. There has been in this land a call to national repentance, and God knows such a call is needed. We have indeed, as a nation, many sins to confess and be ashamed of. But there are other sins which belong to us, not as citizens of this or any other earthly nation, but as citizens of a heavenly country, as members of Christ's Body, the Church, as those who "were once enlightened, who have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come." The indictment against us is that we have walked after the flesh, seeking to perfect the old



man instead of putting on the new, we have cultivated the friendship of the world at the cost of fidelity to God, we have kept Christ out of His Kingdom by ceasing to love, pray for and make ready for His appearing. There is need of a trumpet voice from heaven to sound in the ears of the whole church, not of one nation, the notes of repentance and hope. "Remember from whence thou art fallen and repent." "Behold I come quickly." May God speedily cause such a voice to be heard, and may He prepare men's hearts to heed, so that they may be kept from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, and escape that strong delusion which is God's judgment upon unfaithfulness. For it is certain that under the power of that delusion the nations will once more rage, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, so that when Christ comes at last to establish His Kingdom, the word will have to be fulfilled, "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath." In that day may we, of God's mercy, have our part with those who, when Christ our life shall be manifested, shall also with Him be manifested in glory (Col. iii. 4, R.V.).







## THE REIGN OF CHRIST.

*Mind Sunday in Advent Dec 15/1918.*

*"For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies  
under His feet."—I. COR. xv. 25.*

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THE apostle breaks off his exposition of the order of the Resurrection, that he may interpose some brief explanatory remarks about the extent and duration of the reign of Christ. He appears to assume that the leading truths concerning that reign were familiar to those whom he was addressing. I shall not take so much for granted, as my present object will be to set forth the main features of Christ's reign, as declared in the Scriptures. But first let me remind you of those grand outlines of the Resurrection which the Apostle describes in the verses immediately preceding our text.

He teaches us that because Christ has been raised from the dead, therefore all the dead shall eventually rise again with their bodies. Then he explains that in this process of resurrection there are to be three successive stages or divisions. The first is past. It includes Christ Himself, and none other. The second is still future. God alone knows how near it may be. Those who shall be raised in this division are described by the apostle in the phrase "they that are Christ's." This certainly does *not* mean

all men who shall eventually be saved from perdition through the blood of Christ. A similar expression occurs in an earlier chapter of the epistle, "all things are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." So also in the epistle to the Romans, "whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." The words in each case are meant to include all those who between the Day of Pentecost and the Lord's Coming shall have believed in Christ, been baptized according to His commandment, and remained faithful. The words also include those who shall be alive when the Lord comes, who shall be changed into immortality without dying at all. The words "at His coming" indicate that epoch of which St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians, when he says that the Lord shall descend from heaven, and both the dead in Christ and they which are alive and remain shall be caught up together to meet the Lord and to have part in His triumphal arrival upon the earth. Then, in the third place, but subsequently, after an interval which we learn from the Book of Revelation will last a thousand years, comes the final stage of resurrection. All the remaining dead without exception, small and great, good and bad, are raised, and stand before God to be judged according to their works. St. Paul describes this last stage simply as "the end." We will consider the significance of the term later on. At present we may resume the consideration of our text.

"He must reign." The word *must* expresses a certainty arising out of the principle stated by our Lord, when He said to the Jews "The Scripture

cannot be broken.”<sup>1</sup> To Him the authority of the Scriptures was decisive. So it should be for us. Other examples of the same argument are found in the Gospels. In Gethsemane the Lord said “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it *must* be?”<sup>2</sup> And again, on the way to Emmaus, He said to the disciples “*Ought* not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”<sup>3</sup> and He proceeded to justify the question by quoting from Moses and the Prophets. That which is written in the Scriptures becomes a divine necessity. So St. Paul regarded the matter. Let us therefore look at some of the Scriptures on which his *must* is based.

The passage to which the apostle refers in the immediate context is the sixth verse of the eighth Psalm. Under prophetic illumination the Psalmist is contemplating the wonder of man's destiny; a creature so frail and insignificant in view of God's handiwork in the visible creation, and yet destined to be set over all the works of God. “Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands, Thou hast put all things under his feet.” Nothing less than this is the object for which man was created. When Adam fell that design seemed frustrated, but in Christ manhood is seen recovered from sin and

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(1) John x. 35.

(2) Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.

(3) Luke xxiv. 26.

death, and in Christ the full destiny of mankind shall be achieved. It is plain that when the Psalmist said "Thou hast put all things under his feet," the use of the past tense did not signify that the thing spoken of was already an accomplished fact. The meaning is that the thing is as good as done (as we say in common language) because it has been announced as God's intention. With God is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. The same remark applies to St. Paul's quotation of the Psalm in the twenty-seventh verse of the chapter from which our text is taken. When the apostle says, "For he hath put all things under his feet," the meaning is that it will certainly happen because it is declared in the Scripture; he does not mean that the thing has actually happened already. That this is the case appears beyond doubt from the comment on this same verse of Psalm 8, which is given in the second chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews; where the writer teaches us expressly that the fifth verse of the eighth Psalm was fulfilled at Christ's Ascension, but the sixth was not. "We see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."<sup>4</sup> Jesus has indeed been exalted. He has taken His seat on the right hand of God, He has been anointed King and Priest; but He has not yet begun to exercise the dominion which is His by inheritance. He still waits to reign.

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(4) Heb. ii. 8, 9.

The same truth appears from that other Psalm, so often quoted in the New Testament, which speaks of the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."<sup>5</sup> The period indicated by the word *until* has not yet been reached. Nothing has yet happened which is any fulfilment of the promise that Christ's enemies shall be made His footstool; and it is a strange delusion which has led Christian men to think and speak of the Lord as now reigning from the Cross, or reigning from heaven. All authority has indeed been given to Him in heaven and in earth, but in earth at least He has not begun to exercise it. The delusion referred to is the more strange because the Lord seems to have taken pains to guard against it. He spake a parable in order to correct the mistaken thought of the disciples that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. In this parable He likens Himself to a nobleman, who "went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom *and to return*."<sup>6</sup> When He returns there are two things to be done. First He takes account with His own servants, then He deals with his enemies. "Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." Such is the manner of the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth. Not till then will He begin to reign.

We speak of the establishment of Christ's king-

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(5) Ps. cx. 1.      (6) Luke xix. 12, 27.



dom on *earth*. It is hardly necessary to tell my present audience that the first manifestation of Christ's kingdom must be on earth. But what saith the Scripture? "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom."<sup>7</sup> And these words of the prophet were quoted by the angel Gabriel, when he was sent to announce to the Virgin Mary that they should be fulfilled in her son Jesus. "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David."<sup>8</sup> So in that other Psalm to which we shall have to refer presently, the Divine purpose is declared, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."<sup>9</sup> And to this again agree the words of another prophet, "I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."<sup>10</sup> And once more, "The Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously."<sup>11</sup>

But we should be here till midnight if we attempted to quote all the Scriptures that declare that Christ's kingdom is to be manifested first on earth. How indeed should it be otherwise? Ask what is the most wonderful and awful sight that has ever yet been seen in all God's universe. Heaven and earth will answer with one voice, "It is the Creator's

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(7) Isa. ix. 6, 7.      (8) Luke i. 32.      (9) Ps. ii. 6.  
 (10) Jer. xxiii. 5.      (11) Isa. xxiv. 23.

cross and tomb." And these were seen on earth. Must not the same earth that received His blood be also the place of His throne? It is another divine necessity. He *must* reign. He must reign on earth.

We return to the consideration of the manner in which Christ's kingdom on earth shall be established. There is a phrase current at the present time which may serve to throw light upon this question. It is the phrase "peaceful penetration." Of course the phrase is used with sole reference to earthly things, and indicates the alleged designs of other nations to quietly spread commercial organizations throughout this country. But the phrase aptly describes the spiritual process by which a great many Christian people imagine that the kingdom of Christ is to be established on earth. It is supposed to be the revealed will of God that the Gospel shall peacefully penetrate into all lands, and gradually be accepted by all nations, till at last the whole world will become Christianized, and Christ's coming (if indeed He is to come at all) will only be the official celebration of a triumph already accomplished. How such a theory as this can have found widespread acceptance among people familiar with the Scriptures, it is indeed hard to conceive. Not only is it devoid of all support in the Scriptures, but it is in direct and startling contradiction to countless passages and to the whole tenor of revelation. Consider the following verses of the Psalm already quoted: "Sit Thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies Thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy

strength out of Zion ; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies, He shall wound the heads over many countries.”<sup>12</sup> This is no description of peaceful penetration. Take another Psalm, the forty-fifth. It contains two prophetic pictures, one of the marriage of the Lamb, the other of the setting up of His throne. “Thy throne O God is for ever and ever ; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre.” But how is the kingdom attained ? “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies.”<sup>13</sup> Two visions precisely corresponding to these prophecies are given in the 19th chapter of the Revelation, where the Lamb is seen coming forth from heaven after His marriage, riding on the white horse, to judge and make war. In the second Psalm also the same things are foretold. The nations and the kings of the earth are depicted gathered together in defiance of Jehovah and His Christ. It is vain to suppose that the prophecy has been fulfilled because the apostles and their company at Pentecost applied it to the confederacy of Herod and Pontius Pilate and the apostate Jews against God’s holy child Jesus. The

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(12) Ps. cx. 2, 5, 6.      (13) Ps. xlv. 3-6.

words still remain in force, “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”<sup>14</sup>

It is no doubt a solemn and a humbling thought that the setting up of Christ’s kingdom on earth will be like the fall of the stone cut out without hands described in Daniel’s prophecy, grinding to powder all the parts of the great image that has usurped Christ’s place, so that they become like the chaff of the summer threshing floors. But so it is written. Let us then proceed to enquire, Who are these enemies of God and Christ, whom He shall find leagued against Him, upon whom He shall render vengeance when He shall be revealed from heaven? The answer may be taken from the Book of the Revelation. “I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”<sup>15</sup> Here also is matter for solemn and indeed sorrowful meditation. The beast is plainly to be identified with that Man of sin, the last Antichrist, whom, as St. Paul teaches us, “the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming.”<sup>16</sup> But in the same chapter the apostle teaches that the Man of sin, the son of perdition,

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14) Ps. ii. 9.

15) Rev. xix. 20.

16) II. Thes. ii. 8.

will be, like Judas, the fruit of apostasy, and will band together in open rebellion against God, not mere unbelievers who have never known the grace of God, but men who have known the way of truth and forsaken it, who have "counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing and done despite to the Spirit of grace."<sup>17</sup> Grievous as this may be to contemplate, it is vain to shut our eyes to the rapidly accumulating symptoms of such apostasy. The mystery of iniquity doth indeed already work.

Let us pause a moment to stablish our hearts by looking at the brighter side of the picture. The coming of the Lord certainly draweth nigh. That day will come as a thief in the night upon the ungodly, and bring sudden destruction. But there is no reason why it should come unawares upon the faithful, upon those who are children of light and of the day, who are obeying the Lord's command to watch and pray always that they may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. This and nothing else is the true hope and calling of the faithful church, namely to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, to put on immortality and incorruption, to be made like Him, and so to appear with Him in glory when He shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels to put down His adversaries. It is a mistake, for which there is no warrant, to suppose that the descent of the Lord

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(17) Heb. x, 29.

first into the air and then to the earth will all be the work of a moment. There may be much to be done between our being caught up to meet the Lord and our appearing with Him in glory. We venture on no speculations. And in the period beyond this, when the Lord shall have come to the earth, shall have vanquished His enemies and established His kingdom, there is very little revealed as to the employment of the glorified Church during the thousand years of Christ's reign. We know that we shall sit with Him on His throne and reign on the earth, but we know little more. Probably in our present condition of mortality we are incapable of apprehending the mode of the life to come. It matters not. We know that we shall ever be with the Lord. Our hearts need nothing more.

Let us now return to consider the progress of events upon the earth after the Lord shall have appeared with His glorified Church, after the Antichrist and his armies shall have been destroyed and the word fulfilled, "His enemies shall lick the dust."<sup>18</sup> The next great step appears to be the conversion of God's ancient people Israel and their establishment in their own land, with Jerusalem as the metropolis of the whole earth, and the centre at which the presence and glory of God shall be revealed, from whence the knowledge and the blessings of God shall flow out to all nations like those healing waters which Ezekiel saw issuing from the sanctuary. It is indeed

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(18) Ps. lxxii. 9.



very probable that even before the appearing of the Lord there will have been a partial return of the Jews to Palestine; and there is good reason for thinking that after the translation of the faithful church the rage of Antichrist will be directed against the Jews, who then may be the only witnesses for Jehovah left upon the earth. For it is written that in that day, when the Lord will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem, His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, and His kinsmen after the flesh shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn.<sup>19</sup> So all Israel shall be saved, and He shall comfort them even as Joseph comforted his brethren and kissed them. Then shall the ancient promise to Abraham find its literal fulfilment, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."<sup>20</sup> For the Jew is the destined missionary for converting the heathen; through the Jew shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. By the Jew will the Lord teach the nations His ways; His law shall go forth of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and thither shall the nations go up year by year to worship the Lord of hosts and to keep the feast of tabernacles. Then at last dawns upon the earth a real kingdom of peace. Then they shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks, then nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war

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(19) Zech. xiv. 3, 4; xii. 10.

(20) Gen. xxii. 18.

any more, for the Prince of peace shall reign, and all nations shall serve Him.

Yet the abundance of peace, the impossibility of war, is only one among the many wonders of Christ's kingdom on earth. Long ago God promised through Moses "I will take sickness away from the midst of thee."<sup>21</sup> Now it will be fulfilled. The inhabitants of that kingdom shall not say I am sick, for the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.<sup>22</sup> Death indeed, that last enemy, will not yet be finally destroyed, but it will be restrained. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days, for the child shall die an hundred years old."<sup>23</sup> Nay, more than this. The peace of Christ's dominion shall be felt beyond the race of man, even in the brute creation. "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain saith the Lord." Lastly, the ground of the earth itself shall be delivered from the curse pronounced when Adam sinned. It shall no more bring forth thorns and thistles. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree. The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."<sup>24</sup>

We have left unnoticed one other principal feature of this glorious time. We have referred to the destruction of Antichrist and his followers at the

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(21) Exod. xxiii. 25.

(22) Isa. xxxiii. 24.

(23) Is. lxv. 20, 25.

(24) Isa. lv. 13 ; xxxv. 1.

appearing of the Lord, but there is another adversary who is subdued at the same time—Satan, the great deceiver, the usurper who has sought to withstand Christ and obtain the kingdom for himself, he is now bound; not yet cast into the lake of fire, but shut up in the abyss till the thousand years shall be fulfilled. After that he must be loosed a little season. Here is another example of this solemn word *must*. It is another necessity; not a blind fate or something outside God's foreknowledge and man's responsibility, but the last test by which is demonstrated man's evil heart of unbelief, and the righteous judgment of God. During the thousand years of Christ's reign upon the earth men will be altogether free from external temptation. The tempter will be shut up, the conditions of life will present no incitement or occasion to sin. Yet the Scriptures indicate that even then there will be those whose heart is not right with God, who have submitted themselves to Him because of the greatness of His power, but with feigned obedience, flattering Him with their lips. This hypocrisy it is which causes Satan to be loosed out of his prison, and to be allowed one more opportunity to deceive. Once more he will gather together the unfaithful to battle against God, but "then cometh the end." Fire out of heaven devours the adversaries, Satan is cast into the lake of fire; the final judgment before the great white throne takes place, in which all the dead, small and great, stand before God; the heavens and the earth that now are pass away, and a new heaven and a new earth are con-

stituted wherein dwelleth righteousness. "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the tabernacle of God is with men."<sup>25</sup> Thus the end is also a beginning. We are brought to the limit of all that God has been pleased to reveal to us hitherto. But sin and death are from this point onwards altogether past and gone. From this point begins therefore a new and endless disclosure of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

In the passage from which our text was taken, St. Paul makes two very noteworthy statements concerning this new age. In the first place he declares that Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. It is a mysterious phrase, which I do not presume to explain. On the one hand it can hardly imply that Christ ceases to reign, for "of His kingdom there shall be no end." On the other hand, it does seem to imply some change in the mode of His kingdom. Let us remember that the one aim of the Son of God is to manifest the Father and to glorify Him. The change referred to may therefore be some demonstration of the eternal truth that "the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do."<sup>26</sup> Just as we can only reign because Christ reigns in and by us, so the Son reigns because the Father reigns in Him. "I in them and Thou in Me."<sup>27</sup> This necessary truth will

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(25) Rev. xxi. 3-5.

(26) John v. 19.

(27) John xvii. 23.

be made more manifest. And the other statement of the apostle fits in harmoniously. "That God may be all in all." This is no pantheistic absorption of the creature into the Deity. They remain ever distinct. Neither do the words imply any cessation of Christ's mediatorship. It remains eternally true that there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. But the words do seem to imply some drawing closer to God than has ever been possible before, some communion with the Father in the Son by the Spirit, more intimate, more blissful than anything which has hitherto been experienced. Perhaps it is all summed up in that great word spoken by the Lord, "I have declared unto them Thy name and *will declare it.*"<sup>28</sup> It is a declaration which will continue for eternity. Who can guess what it may contain, or fathom the deep ocean of God's love?

Let me conclude with one word of warning. We are living in a period of upheaval. The reaction from the strain of war is producing an almost hysterical clamour for a reconstitution of the world in such wise as to make war impossible and peace secure. The object is good, but it can never be attained save by the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and the establishment of His kingdom on the earth. Let us take heed to ourselves lest haply, through ignoring Christ's coming, we be found even to fight against God.

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(28) John xvii. 26.

*Printed May 1945*  
HOMILY *Personal*

*(Albury, PENTECOST, 8 JUNE 1919)*

EPISTLE—EPH. iv, 4-16. GOSPEL—JOHN xiv, 15.

THE Day of Pentecost was the starting-point of a new dispensation. The shadows of the old law were changed into the realities of the Body of Christ. Grace and truth, foretold by Moses, *came* by Jesus Christ. In the epistle, St. Paul expounds the wonderful significance of the event we celebrate. Jesus the Crucified One has ascended up far above all heavens, having first descended into the lower parts of the earth to prove that there is no region which is not subject to His sway. Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He has begun the work of filling all things by sending down the Holy Ghost upon the men whom the Father had given Him; a work which will only be completed when all things in heaven and earth are gathered together in one in Christ, and all creation is glorified with the glory of God in the life of the world to come. To this end the next step after the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ is the formation and perfecting of Christ's Body, the Church. This is God's work



in the present dispensation. It began as on this day. It will be finished when the Lord appears.

In the gospel we see the Lord standing as it were on the edge of the old dispensation, and "reaching forth unto those things which are before." His faith, "pressing toward the mark," regards even the impending Passion as among "the things that are behind": He speaks to the disciples as to men standing on the threshold of a new age, and seeks to prepare them for altogether new conditions.

How little able ~~they~~ were, to understand His words. When He spoke of going to the Father, Philip said, "Lord, shew us the Father." When He promised to manifest Himself to them, Jude asked, "How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?" When He spoke about "a little while," they murmured in perplexity, "We cannot tell what He saith." They were very "dull of hearing," very "slow of heart." And yet, in spite of all their defects and foolishness the Lord gives thanks for them. He declares that He is glorified in them because at least they have believed that the Father sent Him, and He beseeches the Father to keep them through His own name. After three years of strenuous ministry it does not seem a great result that eleven men should be found who could believe that He came forth from God, with very dim understanding of the words they uttered. But it was enough. Some human link must be found, however feeble, to join the old dispensation to the new. Some

stepping-stones must be laid whereby the purpose of God may pass over from the natural to the spiritual, from the earthly to the heavenly region. And in the Day of Pentecost the transition was effected. The Holy Ghost came down upon the little company, and a beginning was made. Men were lifted up into newness of life, and made partakers of the heavenly calling.

We need not trace the history of the Christian dispensation. It has been the too faithful copy of the preceding. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost" is the terrible indictment which lies against both. No doubt in every age God has had His faithful remnant, but "except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom." And now the end of this dispensation is at hand. We stand upon the threshold of the new. The condition of the world is such that even the princes of Babylon are alarmed at the handwriting upon the wall; but where are the servants with loins girded about and lights burning, like unto men that wait for their Lord? God's eye may see them in every part of the Catholic Church. ¶ Let us not judge others but take heed to ourselves, lest we fail the Lord at the supreme moment. The work of the Holy Ghost in this dispensation is not to take Christ's place but to prepare for His return. The last and indispensable stage in that preparation is that Christ may find some, if but a little company, in whom the transition may be made from mortal life to immor-

talities. The Lord has spoken many words to us about this change. We are as little able to understand as were the disciples in the night before He suffered. Let us not perplex ourselves with curious guesses or rash assumptions. We shall never understand till the event happens. Then all will be clear, as it was on the Day of Pentecost. Meanwhile, let us continually beseech the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to work in us such fellowship of heart with Jesus our Lord, that we may be ready. For "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

## HOMILY

*1st Sunday after Circumcision—Jan. 4th, 1920.*

EPISTLE—COL. ii. 8-17 ; GOSPEL—LUKE ii. 15-21.

“**W**HEN the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman made under the law.”

This is a short sentence, yet it contains all theology, and sums up the whole truth concerning the Person and work of Christ. He Who was born in Bethlehem, Whom the shepherds found lying in the manger, did not then begin to be. For in this babe dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. This is He Who was in the beginning with God, by Whom all things were made. He is now come forth from the Father, to do the Father's will. God hath sent forth His Son.

Next, he is made of a woman. In earlier times He had on various occasions manifested Himself to His servants *under the form* of man. Now He is manifested not only under the form but *in the true nature* of man. The Word has become Flesh.

The only-begotten Son, who from all eternity was in the bosom of the Father, has condescended to be conceived, through the Holy Ghost, in the womb of a virgin, and has taken part of her substance. He has not taken a new-created human nature, nor even a re-constituted human nature, for His mother could only supply to Him that flesh and blood which she had inherited from Adam, and of which we are alike partakers. Truly in the very act of taking our nature He cleansed it and sanctified it by the Holy Ghost, and He ever presented it to God a living sacrifice—holy, acceptable. But the time for re-constitution, for re-creation, was not yet. Even *He* can only be made perfect *through sufferings*.

For, in the next place, He is not only made of a woman, but He is made *under the law*. The One Lawgiver, He that gave the law by Moses, Himself above all law, He now consents to be made obedient to the law, and thereby makes it honourable. And not only so, but He also takes upon Himself full responsibility for all transgressions of the law committed by all partakers of flesh and blood, whom He is not ashamed to call brethren. There was a fearful hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, the dread account (known only to God) of mankind's guiltiness. When Jesus, on the eighth day of His mortal life, first shed His precious blood, He signed to our

bond: He undertook to pay our debt, to bear our penalty. And on Calvary it was done: the bond was discharged in full, nailed to the cross and cancelled for ever; in token whereof a quittance was proclaimed to all creation by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Thus the festivals of the Nativity and the Circumcision are rightly joined together in our liturgical observances. The work of our salvation is not effected by Incarnation alone. The Lamb of God is sent not only to be an example of spotless holiness in flesh, but also that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. His name is not only Emmanuel, but also Jesus. And this name, given on the eighth day, points forward to that new age, not yet ushered in but soon to dawn, when the Lamb shall reign, and in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.





# SERMON

*Good Friday—April 2nd, 1920.*

ISAIAH liii. 10, 11.

“When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul and, shall be satisfied.”

**T**HUS spake the Holy Ghost by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah concerning our Lord Jesus Christ.

In all the prophecies of the Old Testament, as St. Peter instructs us, there may be traced a double thread. They all speak of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. The words of the text imply also that the glory must be commensurate to the sufferings through which it is attained. For we may reverently apply to the Lord Jesus words which were written concerning His servant, “he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” And of Himself it is expressly said, “for the joy set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame.” We devote this day to the special meditation of His sufferings. Let us not contemplate them merely as a pathetic tale that moves our hearts to pity and brings tears to our eyes. Rather let us

rend our hearts, because we see in the Lord's sufferings our own shame and our reproach. For it was our sin that nailed Him to the tree. And while we adore the amazing mystery of love here revealed, the love of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, let us not forget to search our consciences with the question: What is it that has postponed love's perfect triumph? The travail of His soul has been endured, but has He yet been satisfied? And if not, who is responsible for the delay?

The epistle for this service reminds us that "the law had a shadow of good things to come"; and both in this and the preceding chapter the writer is at pains to expound the special rites of the Day of Atonement as types of the shedding of Christ's blood for the great sin-offering, and of the subsequent entry as High Priest into the true holy place *by His own blood*. But we may remind ourselves that the slaying of the sin-offering and the sprinkling of the blood within the sanctuary was not the first act of the High Priest on this great day. He began by offering the daily burnt offering, the morning lamb. The spiritual import of the burnt offering, wholly consumed by the fire of God's love, is entire self-surrender, complete dedication to the service of God. The epistle illustrates this by quoting the words of the Psalm, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." The writer puts the words into the mouth of the Lord

“ when He cometh into the world ” ; that is really *before, with a view to*, the Incarnation. We are reminded thereby that with God there is no shadow of turning, no change of plan, no afterthought, Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. His sacrifice is the eternally designed expression of the immutable love of God. But the realization of His burnt offering *in fact* is, of course, to be seen in His absolute fulfilment of all righteousness in the true nature of man.

From the early dawn of His human consciousness we trace the continuous presentation of Himself as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God ; which is indeed man’s reasonable service, but was never fulfilled by any man before. At twelve years old we hear Him say “ Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business ? ” At the introduction to His ministry He recognises the obligation “ to fulfil all righteousness.” He follows no self-chosen path, for “ My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me ” ; and He ever waits on the intimation of God’s will, “ I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, for therefore am I sent.” This whole burnt offering may be said to have received its official recognition and acceptance, so to speak, on the mount of Transfiguration ; when the yet mortal body of the Lord was invested with heavenly glory, and the voice of the Father was heard attesting His perfect righteous-

ness, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." His personal title to glory is admitted, but there is something else that then hinders His permanent glorification. "For us men and for our salvation, He came down from heaven." He has identified Himself with sinners. He has taken part of that same flesh and blood which in all others has been the instrument of sin. If sinners are to be saved, if man's nature is to appear in the courts of heaven at all, there is the awful necessity that the curse due to God's broken law shall be borne by man, and that by One who being Very Man is Himself without sin. This was the second and far harder part of the mission of the Son of Man. First the burnt offering, then the sin offering. He descends from the holy mount, He sets His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. He begins to speak in plain terms to the twelve of His approaching passion. Perhaps the human heart craved a little human sympathy. Alas, He looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but He found none.

At last came the day when the Passover must be killed, and the hour of decision. Jesus knew that His hour was come. He does not falter. Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end, to the last extremity, to the final issue. But at this point one ray of kindly light is vouchsafed to

Him amid the encircling gloom, to lead Him on. The spotless Victim cannot shed His own blood. That waits for the morrow and the hands of wicked men. Yet now, before the actual immolation, the Holy Ghost enables the destined High Priest to anticipate in a spiritual mystery His own entry into the holiest of all. "This is My Body. This is My Blood of the new testament." He is enabled to present before God the memorial of the sin offering as though it were already consummated; and at the brink of death He begins to do that for which now He ever liveth, to make intercession for us. Then the shadows close in. Jesus was troubled in spirit, and testified, Verily, one of you shall betray me. In a few moments the traitor goes out into the night. "Now is the Son of Man glorified," is the exclamation of the Lord, as if relieved to recognize that suspense is over, and the power of darkness is set in action. He will go to meet it. Arise, He says, let us go hence. They sing their psalm, and bend their steps to the garden.

In the earlier part of to-day's service we have contemplated the stages of the Lord's Passion. We have watched His agony and bloody sweat, we have seen the treacherous kiss, we have heard Him denied, we have beheld Him falsely accused, unjustly condemned, mocked and spitted on, scourged and crowned with thorns, hanged on the tree. It is the



most piteous of human tragedies. But let us look deeper. It is also the final stage of the sin offering. "The bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." The burning without the camp was not a token of acceptance but of abhorrence. The hanging on a tree was not an expression of God's favour, but of His wrath. There are no words to express the truth but those of Scripture. "God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." There is the meaning and measure of sin. The prophet of old exclaimed, "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God." But it was the actual fact. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, the light of God's countenance was shut out by the iniquity of us all. And it broke His heart. Jesus bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.

Thus far we have been occupied in meditating that which is contained in the phrase "the travail of His soul." But, as we said at the outset, there is a double thread in prophecy which must always be observed. The sufferings of Christ must never be disjoined from the glory that should follow. It is time therefore to turn our thoughts to that which is suggested by the words, "He shall be satisfied."

We say *suggested*, for who is sufficient for these things? We know in part, we prophesy in part. How tiny is the part that we can apprehend either of Christ's travail or of His joy. And even when that which is perfect is come and we shall know as also we are known, still eternity will never exhaust the disclosure of those wonders which God has prepared to satisfy the heart of Him who once poured out His soul unto death. Thus it seems very appropriate that in the latter part of this holy service, when we have placed on the altar the Sacrament reserved from yesterday, we have been taught to fall down and beseech God for some of those things without which the heart of Jesus will never be satisfied.

The first prayer is for the Church. Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for *it*. True it is that He gave Himself a ransom for *all*, and that He loves all mankind. None the less it is true that He loves the Church above all others, and that in a special sense He gave Himself to win His Church. She is that treasure hidden in the field, that one pearl of great price, for which He was content to give up all that He had. So we pray in the Collect for the week, Graciously behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ *was contented* to be betrayed, and to suffer death. He has espoused the Church to Himself, He has given her love-tokens of heavenly gifts, He speaks of Himself as an expectant bridegroom.

Why has He had to wait these weary ages? Why has there not yet been heard the voice of the great multitude saying, "Alleluia, Let us be glad and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come?" We all know the sorrowful reason. His wife hath *not* made herself ready, the heart of the espoused virgin has been beguiled. Therefore the daughter of Zion is left as a beseiged city, entangled with the world, overcome of evil. In these our days God has mercifully given us some discernment of our sin, and made us rejoice in the hope of restoration and deliverance. For the accomplishment of this we pray. Yes, but with what motive do we pray, and for whose sake? Oh, not for our own sakes, but for His. Not that we may escape from the consequences of our own transgressions, but that He may be satisfied; not that we may obtain a crown of glory, but that He may rejoice over His bride with joy, that He may rest in His love.

In the two prayers next following, we pray for the effectual working of the fourfold ministry in the universal church, and for the angels of the several churches; then follow prayers for all priests and deacons, and for all the company of the faithful as those in whom the Holy Ghost would dwell and manifest His gifts, the powers of the world to come. Next we pray that the full number of the election to membership in Christ's mystical Body may be gathered out, and that all who have been joined unto Christ

may be recovered from their wanderings and divisions, and restored to the unity of the truth. Here we are reminded that the Church is not only Christ's Bride but also His Body ; not only the recipient of His love but also the instrument by which, when perfected, He will make known to all, angels and men, the manifold wisdom of God, and fill creation with God's praise. We are apt to think of the fourfold ministry and other ordinances solely with reference to our own perfecting. Let us not forget that when at last the whole Church shall have arrived at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, it will be not an end but a beginning. Then the glorified Head, having at length every member of His one Body made like unto Him in His glory, will be able, as never before, to declare and pour forth the unsearchable riches of the Christ. Then He will begin to be satisfied.

Next comes a prayer for the afflicted, the suffering, the oppressed. Christ is the Saviour of the body as well as of the soul. How is His heart wrung by the groaning that goes up from all the earth. He hears the sighing of the prisoners, He sees all the anguish of heart and body. He died to cure it all. He will never be satisfied till God shall wipe away all tears, and there shall not be any more pain.

Then in our prayers we bethink ourselves of another deep longing of His heart. He yearns over His kinsmen according to the flesh, the house of

Israel. He longs to take the veil from their hearts, to take away all their iniquity and receive them graciously. He will not be satisfied without them.

Finally, and in due sequence, we pray for the conversion to God of the heathen nations. We say in due sequence, because the heathen nations will never be converted until Israel be first restored. The house of Jacob, they are the appointed missionaries by whom that great work shall be accomplished. Christ did certainly ordain that even in this present dispensation the gospel should be preached among all nations by Christian preachers. But the object of such preaching is declared to be not to gather in all nations, but to take out of them a people for God's name. When that is accomplished, when the full election from among the Gentiles shall be come in, then Israel's blindness shall pass, they shall turn to Him from whom they have deeply revolted, and shall go forth to declare His righteousness. Then, not till then, all the ends of the world shall turn unto the Lord, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

For these things the Lord waits. What can we do to help Him? We can do one thing. We can forget those things which are behind, we can reach forth unto those things which are before, we can cry day and night with importunity that will not be discouraged, Lord Jesus, Come.







## HOMILY

*Sunday next before Advent.—Nov. 21st, 1920.*

EPISTLE—JER. xxiii. 5-8. ; GOSPEL—JOHN vi. 5-14.

“**H**E Himself knew what he would do. The Lord Jesus was never taken by surprise ; not because there was any intermingling of the attributes of His divine and human natures, but because in the integrity of manhood He ever walked with God. He ever lived in the Spirit and walked in the Spirit. His human soul and spirit were by the Holy Ghost so perfectly attuned to the mind and will of God that He was instantly responsive to every indication of His Father’s mind, and prompt to act when God gave the signal. Such a signal Jesus discerned when He saw a great company come unto Him. He had crossed the lake in order that He and His disciples might rest a while. But the people had followed Him on foot, and He had compassion on them. The day began to wear away. They needed food. Jesus turns to Philip and asks him, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat ? It is impossible not to hear in these words a little note of gentle irony. This he said to prove him ; but surely not

to prove Philip only. Rather it was a note of warning for us all, pointing to that great principle which He announces at the close of the discourse that followed on the miracle, "The flesh profiteth nothing." Man's wisdom, man's power are useless for God's work. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." The simple-hearted Philip can only exclaim at the hopelessness of the situation. Then Andrew mentions the five loaves and the two fishes, almost with a smile at his own suggestion; What are they among so many? Jesus answers, Make the men sit down.—St. John tells us in a previous verse that the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. Probably he does so in order to give us a hint of that which was passing in the Lord's mind. He could not go to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, because the Jews sought to kill Him. At a former Passover He had been rejected though the Baptist had testified of Him as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. But now the presence of the multitude and their need of food suggests another fulfilment of the type of the Paschal Lamb. Christ is sent not only to take away our sins, but to be our life, our life's food. Jesus seizes the opportunity to keep the Passover in a higher and more spiritual manner. He gives food miraculously that thereby He may teach them in a figure about that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, and may prepare them for that

eating of His flesh and drinking His blood, of which the outcome is resurrection life.

But few of those that saw the miracle and heard His words were able to apprehend their import. The multitude wanted to take Him by force to make Him a King. The Jews murmured because He said I am the bread which came down from heaven. Many of His disciples went back because He spoke of ascending up where He was before. Even among the twelve there was a little hesitation. Will ye also go away? the Lord asks. Then comes a splendid answer of faith. "Lord to whom shall we go. Thou hast the words of eternal life." Peter does not profess to understand. He and his fellows are quite perplexed at the turn which the Lord's work seems to be taking. But of one thing they are sure, that their Master is the Christ the Son of the living God. Therefore they will cleave to Him, and follow whithersoever He leads.

This is the kind of faith that we need to-day. We have come to a situation in which we are certainly perplexed but also certainly not in despair. We see the need. We do not see how it is to be met. Let us not hinder the Lord by trying to devise some expedient of our own. It is He that hath led us hitherto, and we are sure that He will still lead us. He Himself knows what He will do. Our safety is to wait for Him.



## HOMILY.

18th Sunday after Pentecost—18th September, 1921

EPISTLE—EPH. iv. 1-6 ; GOSPEL—LUKE xiv. 1-11.

“**I** BESEECH you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” What is this vocation or calling of which we are to walk worthy? It is the highest possible for any created being, higher even than that of the angels in heaven ; so high, so wonderful, that the apostle tells the Ephesians how he prays that the eyes of their understanding may be enlightened, that they may know what is the hope of His calling. Illumination by the Holy Ghost is needed to apprehend it. In the chapter from which this epistle is taken, this wondrous calling or destiny of the Church is set forth under the figure of a *body*. A man needs his body to do his work and carry into effect his designs. Christ, the Man, in whom are hid all the treasures of God’s eternal counsels, waits to carry them into execution. He cannot do it without His Body. Our calling is to be made His instrument. He waits, all



creation waits, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

In the next chapter the mystery of our calling is expressed by another figure, that of the married wife. Perhaps this is the more wonderful figure of the two. It is much that Christ should use us as the instrument for effecting His purpose. It is much more that he should make the Church His confidant, should open to her His heart, share with her His plans, and find in her devoted sympathy the satisfaction of His heart's desires. Well may the apostle say this is a great mystery. Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it.

But this being the nature of our vocation, how are we to walk worthy of it? The apostle does not refer to high spiritual endowments, tongues of men and angels; he does not speak of conspicuous service, such as bestowing all our goods to feed the poor, or giving our body to be burned; his answer is much more simple; "with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." They that are called to share Christ's throne and glory, they that are called to be His nearest and dearest, must first learn of Him who said: "I am meek and lowly in heart." He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Christ humbled Himself, and therefore God hath highly exalted Him. All mankind should indeed follow the example of His great

humility, but they should be first and foremost in so doing who have received the high and heavenly calling.

Possibly one reason for our present experiences may be that the Lord is seeking to perfect in us this grace of meekness and lowliness. We can no longer offer the Intercession according to the perfect order as we used to do. We can no longer sound the trumpet of testimony far and wide. We are shut up to one thing, namely, to wait for the Lord to manifest Himself and to begin a new mode of action in the power of Resurrection life. Is He perchance waiting because He sees that we are not quite ready? The apostle John writes: "When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." We are wont to apply the words to the sudden transformation of our bodies, when "this corruptible shall put on incorruption." But the words may also refer to inward spiritual conformity to Him. Let us give diligence that this be not lacking. Let us seek to be like Him in lowliness and meekness. Then we shall be conformed to the body of His glory.



## HOMILY.

*First Sunday after Circumcision, January 8th, 1922.*

EPISTLE—ROMANS i. 1-5; GOSPEL—LUKE ii. 41.

THE Epistle and Gospel for the day show us the real meaning of the burnt offering under the law. The Epistle expounds the spiritual truth signified, the Gospel sets before us the one perfect example of its fulfilment. “Present your bodies a living sacrifice.” The words sound like a contradiction, for the blood of every burnt offering was poured out at the brazen altar, and the flesh consumed in the flame which was first kindled by fire from heaven. But the true spiritual import of the type was absolute devotion of the creature’s life to God, utter self-renunciation, and confession that the flesh cannot please God, but must be purified in the fire of God’s love, and so become a sweet savour unto Him by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

In Jesus, and in Him alone, is seen this perfect consecration to the service of God, this absolute rejection of all confidence in the flesh, this complete self-surrender to the inspiration of the Spirit, this

unfaltering obedience even unto death. “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” We note with awe, but without any profane attempt to understand, how in the Child of twelve years the mystery of His own Person has already dawned upon His human consciousness. He obeys His mother and her husband, waiting till God’s time shall come, but He gently intimates to them what He afterwards said plainly to the Pharisees, “I know whence I came and whither I go.” From this day forth He sets Himself to present His body (and therefore also His human soul and spirit) a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. He will not be conformed to this world in any respect. He will not be beholden to the prince of this world for bread, nor make a bargain with him for a short cut to the kingdom. Though He will obey Cæsar and yield him tribute as God’s minister, yet He will give no account to Cæsar of His own mission, nor purchase earthly favour by violation of His heavenly stewardship. His whole life is a continuous application of one principle; the flesh profiteth nothing, it is the Spirit that quickeneth. Not only on the cross but throughout His life on earth He offered Himself without spot to God. He was a continual and perfect burnt offering, of whom it was ever true, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” And on the mount of Transfiguration God testified His acceptance of this burnt offering. “This is my

beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And then to Him Who was never for a moment conformed to this world God gave a foretaste of *transformation*, that lifting up of the sanctified human nature into immortality and glory, to which Jesus attained by His Resurrection and Ascension, and to which we may attain by faith in Him.

Let us then, being mindful of the mercies of God, present our bodies a living sacrifice to Him. The mercies here spoken of are these, that by the sin offering of the death of Christ we have been delivered from the curse of the law; that by Christ's Resurrection and the sending of the Holy Ghost we are already quickened with new and heavenly life, and are spiritually translated into another world. By the power of this life in us we *can* avoid being conformed to this present evil world which is passing away. But that is only the negative side of the matter. There is also the being *transformed* into the image of Christ. This is the object of every ordinance and ministry in Christ's Church. Let us be diligent in using them all, but remember that they all lead up to one end. And that end may come suddenly, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.





## HOMILY.

*Sexagesima Sunday, February 19th, 1922.*

EPISTLE—II. COR. xi. 19-31; GOSPEL—LUKE viii. 4-15.

THE parable of the Sower was the first of a series in which the Lord began to prepare the disciples for the work of this present dispensation. He calls it the mystery of the Kingdom of God. Having found that the people generally and the rulers at their head had no ears to hear of anything but an earthly kingdom with its earthly advantages, He now begins to speak of heavenly things; of a kingdom which will be heavenly in origin and constitution, in which they shall reign with Christ who shall be made partakers of His heavenly life and glory. Thus the parable of the Sower contains the true principles underlying the work of the Gospel in the Christian dispensation, and is the key to all God's actings in the Christian Church. Know ye not this parable, the Lord said, and how then will ye know all parables? And indeed some of its most obvious lessons have been

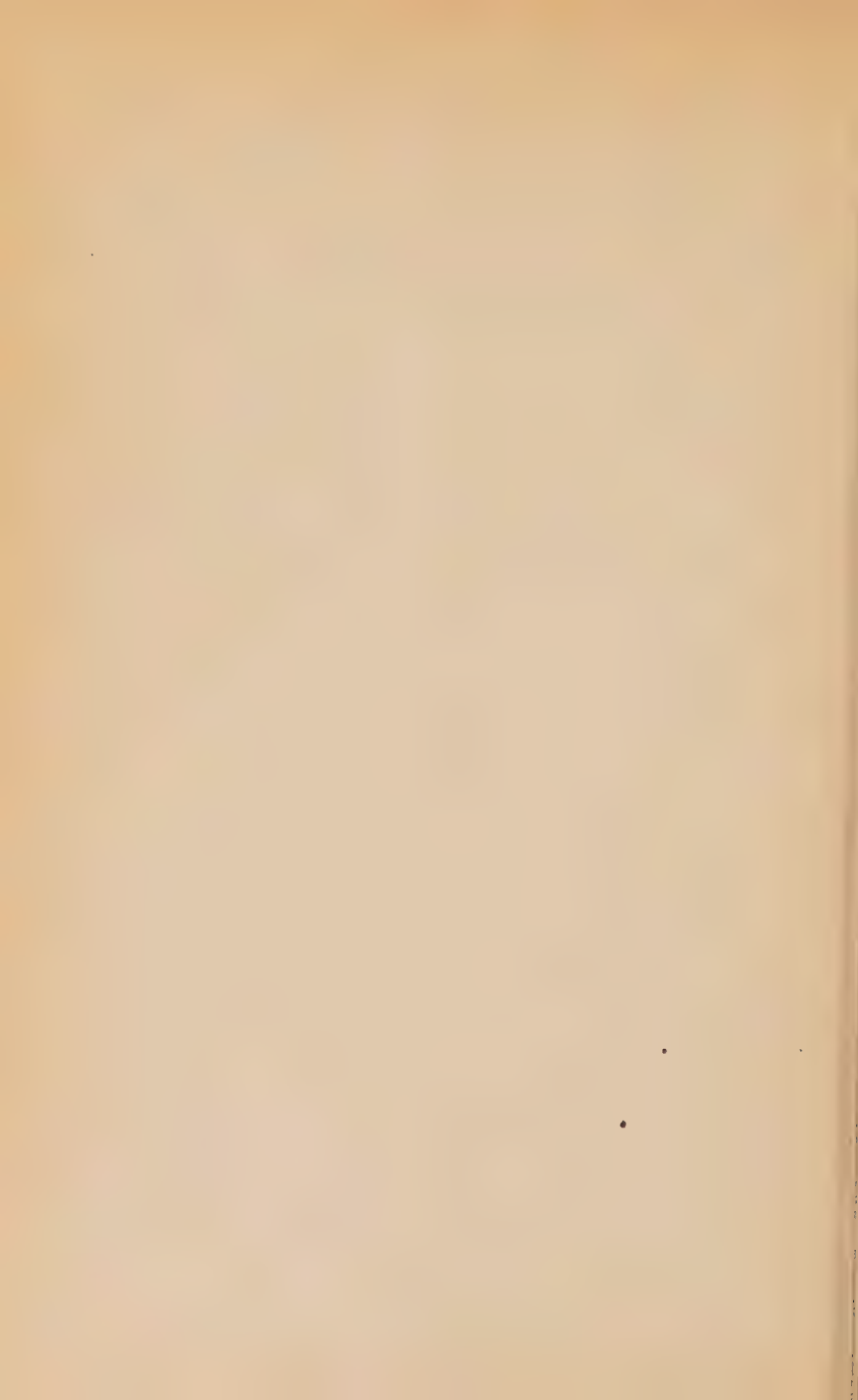
ignored. When a sower sows seed in his field he does it in order to produce a new crop. He does not buy a field merely for its own sake, but also for the sake of that which he hopes to get out of it. But the field and the crop are not identical. Christ has bought the field, which is the world, at the cost of His own blood. For God loved the world. But it is also written, Christ loved the *Church* and gave Himself for *it*. The perfected, glorified Church, this is the precious fruit of the earth for which the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Husbandman, waiteth and hath long patience.

And this heavenly fruit springs from heavenly seed. The sower soweth the word, the Gospel of Christ. It may indeed be said that Christ Himself is the seed, for the Gospel is nothing else than the proclamation and ministration of that which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand. So the Lord Himself said, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. The calling of the Church, begotten with the word of truth, is to be the first fruits of God's creatures. When that heavenly harvest has been gathered into God's heavenly garner, then the Husbandman will take steps to produce from the field fruit of another standard. Then He will replant the House of Israel, long withering under the curse invoked on them-

selves by their own lips. Then He will convert the heathen and fill the earth with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea. Then He will revoke that more ancient curse pronounced upon the very ground for man's sake. Then shall the wilderness blossom as the rose, the parched ground shall become a pool. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then they shall see the glory of the Lord and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. And yet it will remain ever true "The glory of the celestial is one, the glory of the terrestrial is another."

My soul desired the first ripe fruit. This is the longing of Jesus, the Husbandman, the Sower. How are they unconsciously hindering Him who dream that the object of the Gospel in this dispensation is to spread over the world a merely natural civilisation tempered with Christian morality; who preach Christ's precepts but ignore Christ's return, forgetting that the only thing that will put an end to sin, suffering, and death is the presence of Him Who is the Resurrection and the Life.

Let us, if we can do nothing else, be of one mind with Him. Let us beseech Him to remove all hindrances, especially our hardness of heart, and *to come*. And let us so pray not for our own sakes, but that He Who has laboured and waited so long may at length see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.



## HOMILY

*Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost (22nd October, 1922).*

EPISTLE—EPHESIANS iv, 17. GOSPEL—MATTHEW ix, 1-8.

“**S**ON be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.”

Forgiveness first, then healing. This was the order followed by the Lord in His miracle of mercy. It is also the order which God follows in the whole work of salvation. Suffering, disease and death are all the consequence of sin. It does not follow that they who suffer most are the greatest sinners. The exact contrary is often true. But sin is the poisonous root from which all the mischief proceeds. There is a time promised when there shall be no more pain. It is equivalent to saying there shall be no more sin.

From the first, therefore, so soon as sin had entered into the world and death through sin, God preached to man the way of deliverance. His Spirit strove with the creature that had so recently acquired the perilous knowledge of good and evil, that man might know to refuse the evil and choose the good. Also the way of approach to God through sacrifice was revealed. But in the epistle for this service the apostle draws a sad picture of the state of the Gentile world. Resistance to God's Spirit had produced blindness of heart,



a darkening of the understanding, alienation from the life of God, and a condition which he describes as being *past feeling*, in which all moral instinct seems to be numbed or frozen, so that men give themselves over to lasciviousness and make a business of uncleanness. There are not wanting ominous signs that such a description may again be true of a world which indeed calls itself by the name of Christ, but is not willing to be taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus.

Let us mark the force of those words, "as the truth is in Jesus." Jesus is the Truth. Not only does He declare the truth in word but He is the embodiment of it. He is, so to speak, God's great object-lesson in which the whole truth about God and man is evidently set forth. In His life on earth He was the pattern of that perfect walk with God which has no confidence in the flesh but lives wholly in the Spirit. In His Cross and Passion He was the example of the inflexible severity of God's holiness, which cannot receive and restore the creature that has once fallen, not even in the spotless Person of His Son, till it has suffered the penalty and endured the curse. In His death and burial, His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, Christ is the proof of God's forgiving love, and of His glorious power in re-constituting and exalting the creature which had fallen but has been redeemed.

We have received the forgiveness of sins. Are we thankful? The apostle supplies us with a test "Be ye tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." As we draw near to the Lord's table to feed upon His body and blood, let us see that there be no root of bitterness lurking in our hearts that might cause us to eat and drink unworthily. But forgiveness of sins is not the whole of salvation. There remains the putting off the

old man and the putting on the new man, a process which has indeed been begun in us, but which waits for its completion. This corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. The first step is the forgiveness of sins, the last step is the Resurrection of the body. Like the man sick of the palsy we have heard the blessed word, Thy sins be forgiven thee. We wait to hear the still more blessed word, Arise.



# HOMILY

*2nd Sunday in Quadragesima (25th February, 1923).*

EPISTLE—2 PET. i, 16. GOSPEL—MATT. xvii, 1-9.

“**L**AST Sunday the Gospel set forth the temptation of the Lord. To-day it brings before us His transfiguration. The two events mark the beginning and the end of a definite period in the Lord’s ministry. He had received from John the baptism of repentance as the Representative of all mankind, who had departed from God. He announced to the Baptist that the next step in His mission was to fulfil all righteousness, to give the first example of perfect obedience in man’s flesh. Straightway the heavens were opened, the Spirit of God descended visibly upon Him, and the voice from heaven was heard, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Immediately Jesus was led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. God’s champion, whose mission it is to destroy the works of the devil, goes forth to await the assault of the adversary. How He overcame we heard last Sunday. And this contest against the devil and all his works went on continuously, God bearing witness to His Incarnate Son with signs and wonders wrought in the power of the Holy Ghost. But now the hour

was at hand when another work must be accomplished, when He who alone had fulfilled righteousness must die for the sins of the whole world, and by the shedding of His precious blood make propitiation for all sin. Now then, at the close of His active ministry God bears witness to His champion and vindicates His perfect sinlessness. The power of the Holy Ghost glorifies for the moment His yet mortal flesh, and the voice from heaven which was heard at His baptism again bears witness to His perfect holiness. Thus was it demonstrated that though He dies for sin, it is for the sin of others only. He Himself is without sin.

But the transfiguration of the Lord teaches us another lesson also. In the beginning man was made lower than the angels. He was made liable to death, but not under the necessity of dying. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the way to it was not yet barred. That was the judgment upon sin. By one man, writes St. Paul, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men. "What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?" "We must needs die." Such is the constant language of the Old Testament. And it was true then. But it is not true now. Christ has died for all. It is no longer true that we all owe God a death, as men foolishly talk. That debt has been paid. The one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for sin has been offered and accepted. Thereby the way to the tree of life has been re-opened. It is no longer true that all men must needs die. On the contrary, the Gospel of Christ proclaims as with the sound of a trumpet, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." And as Christ's Resurrection is the proof that they which sleep in Him shall be raised, so His transfiguration is the sign that there shall be those who shall put on incorruption

and immortality without being unclothed. We look for the Saviour, writes the apostle, who shall *transfigure* the body of our humiliation and make it conformable to the body of His glory. This hope is no cunningly devised fable. It will be accomplished by the power of Christ and be the first stage of His coming, when He shall gather to Himself both those who are raised from death like Moses and those who are caught up without seeing death like Elias. By the light of prophecy, shining in a dark place, God has warned us to be on the alert. Let us beseech Him that the day-star may arise in our hearts, that Christ may so dwell in our hearts by faith so to make us ready to see His face.





# HOMILY

*4th Sunday after Pentecost (17th June, 1923).*

EPISTLE—1 PET. v, 5-11. GOSPEL—LUKE xv, 1-10.

“**I** have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek Thy servant.” So spake the Psalmist, and the word is true of all mankind. All we like sheep have gone astray. There has been in every child of Adam an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But God is a God of compassion and tender mercy. He has not left us to the consequences of our own iniquities, nor suffered us to depart from Him for ever. In the Person of His Son He has come forth as a tender Shepherd, to seek and to save that which was lost. At what cost to Himself the Chief Shepherd has done this is indicated in the word of the prophet, the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. The work of our salvation has not been easy. By His Agony and Bloody Sweat, by His Cross and Passion, by His precious Death and Burial, we may form some faint appreciation of the grievousness of sin which needed to be blotted out, in order that God might give free course to His love and tenderness.

But this side of the matter is not set forth in the Lord's parable. His object in the three parables of this chapter is to teach the Pharisees and Scribes that if they can not welcome the recovery of sinners they are disqualifying themselves for the joy of heaven, for participation in the joy of God Himself. The Lord does not stay to rebuke their pride and self righteousness in fancying themselves so superior to those whom they called sinners. He takes them at their own valuation, and says in effect, If you in your righteousness are displeased at mercy shewn to sinners, the air of heaven will not suit you. Your voices will not harmonize with those of the angels, you will be out of sympathy with God.

In the first parable God's pity is set forth as the motive of His action. In the second parable there is a difference. The lost piece of money is not an object of compassion, but a cause of regret, because it has value. God has compassion for all men, but there are some on whom He has set a special value. There are those on whom He has set Christ's image and superscription by the Holy Ghost, and these He accounts as a treasure to be guarded. They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels. Meanwhile they are committed to the custody of the Church, and the fact that a piece is lost may be due to some carelessness or neglect on the part of the custodian. Perhaps the warning is especially directed to ministers, but we are all members one of another, we all have need to watch ourselves lest we make our brother to offend, we may all help to recover them that are out of the way.

Let us then be sober, be vigilant, and let us be clothed with humility. We see the rapid increase of evil both in the world and in the Church, and we know that God's judgments are impending. Let us beseech Him to cleanse our hearts from all taint of self-righteousness or despising of others. Let us pray fervently that He will have mercy on all His people, and be ready to rejoice with Him, if in His love and goodness He gives an answer above all that we can ask or think.



# HOMILY

*1st Sunday after Circumcision (6th January, 1924).*

EPISTLE—COL. ii, 8-17. GOSPEL—LUKE ii, 15-21.

**I**N Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. We have been with the shepherds to Bethlehem, and have worshipped the Babe lying in the manger. We have done so not with more faith than they, but with fuller apprehension. They could not then appreciate the fact that they were looking at God visible in flesh. Let us never for a moment forget that it was so, and that therefore, as we follow the experiences of the Child Jesus, we are contemplating the experiences of God in our nature. Here we see absolute truth, the truth concerning God, and the truth concerning man. Here is no mere similitude, or type, or figure of the truth, but the truth itself, absolute, complete.

To-day we contemplate the first experience of the Incarnate Son of God in our flesh. His blood is shed. Without shedding of blood is no remission of sin. But is He not without sin? He is so indeed,

holy, harmless, undefiled. But He is without sin not because He has taken another human nature than ours, but because in taking it He cleansed it, He sanctified it, for He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. And this process of sanctification was continuous throughout His mortal life. He lived in the Spirit, He walked in the Spirit. At every moment of His mortal life He held every faculty of His human spirit and soul and body in perfect surrender and dedication to God. The enemy attacked Him and sought to find in Him some weak point at which temptation might find an entrance. He found none—Jesus could say with truth, The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

Why then must *He* be circumcised, why must *His* blood be shed? Because there is only *one* human nature, which nature was created in Adam, which in Adam sinned and came under God's condemnation, and which cannot be accepted and delivered even in the spotless Person of God's Son, without the enduring of God's righteous sentence. The circumcision of Jesus is therefore His acceptance of our responsibilities. He is holy, but He has become united to those who are sinners. He subscribes to our bond, that terrible handwriting of God's broken law, which by His death He took out of the way, nailing it to His cross.

But the circumcision of the Lord speaks of other truths also beside the sin of man and the necessity of death. It declares that the nature which was the

instrument of sin in all save Christ alone, shall in Him be re-constituted not only in holiness, but in power and glory. Ministered on the eighth day the rite points to that beginning of a new creation which was seen when Christ was raised from the dead in the power of an endless life.

The order of the first creation is reversed. The Head, the second Adam, is first set in His place of glory and power. The next step, for which the Lord waits and longs, is that they who are buried with Him in baptism, and risen with Him, should be gathered *to* Him; that the covenant with the true seed of Abraham, whereof circumcision was also a sign, should find its complete fulfilment, and the Heir of all things lead His church into the inheritance of the saints in light.

These are the true wishes for a new year.





## HOMILY.

*3rd Sunday after Circumcision. 20th January, 1924.*

EPISTLE—ROM. xii. 6-16; GOSPEL—JOHN ii. 1-11.

THE third day there was a marriage in Cana. The third day from what? Apparently from that interview with Nathanael in which Jesus said to him, "Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." In the miracle which follows we may see a first fulfilment of the Lord's words. For the angels are the agents of God's wonder-working power in the realm of nature, and here we see them waiting on the word of the Son of Man. But only six days had passed since John the Baptist had testified to the messengers of the Pharisees that the Christ was standing among them, though they knew Him not. Then on the next day John seeing Jesus had said, "Behold the Lamb of God;" and on the day after he repeated that testimony, when the two disciples followed Jesus and the formation of the

apostolic college began. We cannot doubt that in all these days Jesus discerned the hand of His Father leading Him. Neither can we doubt that when both Jesus and His disciples were bidden to this marriage in Cana He saw therein a type of the goal to be attained, of the joy set before Him. Well He knew that His hour was not yet come, that there was the cross to be endured, and the long delay occasioned by our unbelief. But nevertheless He welcomes and accepts the indication of God's purpose, and He works the first "sign" of His ministry as a prophetic intimation of the ultimate glorious result, when all sorrow shall be turned into everlasting joy, when all deficiencies shall permanently be made good, when the natural shall be changed into the spiritual, and this mortal put on immortality. Such we understand to be the significance of this "beginning of miracles."

Of the joy thus prefigured we are already partakers in spirit. In Christ we have the forgiveness of sins, and though now we see Him not we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. In Christ we are already changed in spirit, made part of the new creation, lifted up into heavenly places. In Christ we are already heirs of the kingdom, which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Every Eucharist service is an expression of this joy which we have already,

and an anticipation of that which is to come. We take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. We give thanks for all that we have received, and we pray that our joy may be fulfilled. It is not fulfilled yet. We still press toward the mark. We have not yet attained. We wait for the Saviour who shall change the body of our humiliation. Then, not till then, will the full significance of the changing the water into wine be manifested.

Let us not make the mistake of running before the Lord, or thinking to know when His hour is come. He only knows that. Perchance there may be still a trial and testing of our faith. He may cover the altar, and cause the blessed service of Eucharist to cease. If it be so, let us follow the humble faith of her who said to the servants "Whatsoever He saith unto you do it." We do shew the Lord's death *till He come*.



# HOMILY

*5th Sunday after Circumcision. In octave of  
Presentation.*

*Feb 3, 1924*

EPISTLE—MAL. iii, 1-5. GOSPEL—LUKE ii, 22-40.

THERE are many Christian people who, like Nicodemus, think of Christ only as a Teacher. He is indeed the greatest of all teachers, but He is much more. Christ is the express image of God, and by His Incarnation He has become, if we may so speak, God's great object-lesson, whereby to all His creatures God reveals the treasures of His wisdom and the wonders of His love. The two facts which the Scriptures record concerning our Lord's infancy, the second of which we are now commemorating, are striking examples of this principle. As we contemplate the Circumcision and Presentation of the "yet all-silent Word" we are taught indeed; for in these experiences of the Son of God in our flesh we may see in type and shadow the whole counsel of God.

The two events set forth opposite sides of the plan of salvation. In Christ's Circumcision we see the negative side of the matter. The rite speaks of failure that needs to be remedied, of sin that needs to be put away and atoned for. The creature that

God made upright and very good has transgressed and fallen. This has not altered God's love nor His purpose in man, but it has occasioned a further development of both. The eternal Son still condescends to come forth from the Father and take our nature, but He has to come down lower. He takes our nature not on the level of Eden, but in the low estate to which our sin has brought it. He cleanses it in taking it by the Holy Ghost. He lives in it the perfect life of faith and obedience. Then He dies in it, that by the merits of His work in it and the worthiness of His Divine Person He may make full and perfect satisfaction for the sins of all who are partakers of the same flesh and blood. .

So far the negative side of the matter. Jesus hath delivered us from the wrath to come. But is this the whole of salvation? God forbid. There remains the positive side, and this is the greater part of the matter. The Presentation of the Lord in the Temple sets forth this positive side in a tiny type which seems very insignificant to the natural apprehension. But put it under the lens of a spiritual microscope. Throw upon it the light of the Holy Ghost through the Scriptures. Then see how it expands. The root of the mystery lies in the word *first-born*. Mary in obedience to God's law presents to God her first-born Son. But this Babe is He whom God hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds. This Babe is He who shall be declared the Son of God with power, by Resurrection from the dead. This is He who shall be set as Head of



the new creation. In Him God will gather together in one all things both which are in heaven and which are on earth, giving to all stability and perfectness, yet ever advancing them to higher perfection and greater blessedness. All this began to be fulfilled in Christ when in the truth of our nature He ascended into heaven, and was presented before the throne of God. Since then the whole creation has waited, and still waits with inarticulate groanings, for the next step, when the general assembly and church of the first-born shall be gathered to the Lord, and presented faultless before the presence of His glory.

That day is surely at hand. Let us be of those who wait for the consolation of Israel, and look for redemption.



*Albury*  
*Sunday after Ascension*  
*June 1, 1924.*  
SERMON.

EPHESIANS IV, 9, 10.—“Now that He ascended, what is it but that He descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.”

WE are still observing the feast of our Lord's Ascension into heaven. It will therefore be appropriate to make that great event the subject of the present discourse.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, from which my text is taken, St. Paul rises to the highest level of spiritual contemplation. He sets before us the largeness of God's purpose in Christ, namely that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, so that all creatures may be brought into blessed and abiding union with God, through Christ the Head over all. Then He sets forth the destiny and dignity of the Church, which is to be the next link between Christ and all other creatures, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all ; so that through the Church shall be revealed all the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge, through the Church shall be poured forth the inexhaustible

riches of God's grace. Having then explained that the Church is God's election from among mankind, chosen equally from Jews and Gentiles, the apostle proceeds in the fourth chapter to speak of the unity of the Church as the Body of Christ, and of the chief members in that one spiritual organization. This leads him to quote the sixty-eighth Psalm, in which he sees a prophetic picture of Christ's triumphant ascension into heaven, when He attained the reward of His victory, and received gifts for men. At this point the apostle suddenly interrupts himself, and interposes the words of my text, "Now that He ascended, but what is it but that He also descended first?" Probably most of us in reading that passage have felt a little puzzled, and have wondered at the suddenness, perhaps at the apparent vehemence, of the interruption. What is the object of it? I will not undertake to define precisely what was passing in the apostle's mind, but I think he suddenly discerns a possible danger, and makes haste to guard against it. Take care, I understand him to say, beware of supposing that in any respect or degree man can be the author of his own salvation. Salvation is not from beneath, but wholly from above. Man cannot climb into heaven by any effort of his own; God must stoop down and lift him up. When we see Jesus ascending we see indeed *man* ascending, for Jesus is perfect Man. But we also see in Jesus Him who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven. He that ascends is the same that descended first. He that ascends, that He may fill all things, is the same Person who, being in the form of God, emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death. Now He became not only the author, but also the first example of salvation. In the truth of

our flesh He receives the reward of faith and is exalted to the right hand of God. The word is fulfilled which Jesus spake by anticipation to Nicodemus, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven."

The snare by which the enemy of God and man seduced our first parents was nothing else than this; that they should endeavour to raise themselves to a higher level of being by their own action, independently of God. "Ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil." It was a half truth, and like most half truths the more deadly on that account. They did indeed acquire knowledge, but in doing so they let the poison of distrust of God infect their spirits and souls, and they put a barrier between themselves and God which remains in the natural man to this day. They who sought to ascend, not on the wings of God's Spirit, but by their own efforts and at the instigation of the devil, found that they had descended indeed, fallen into a horrible pit, and 'had put a barrier between themselves and God, which nothing that they themselves might do could ever sweep away. But God, who is rich in mercy, did not abandon His erring creature. Even while He pronounces judgment He remembers mercy, and holds out the promise of a Redeemer. That Redeemer is indeed the Seed of the woman, but He is also the only-begotten Son who comes forth from the bosom of the Father and descends to our low estate, that He may at once vindicate God's righteousness and manifest God's love.

By the expression "the lower parts of the earth," we understand the apostle to indicate the truth expressed in the Creed, "He descended into Hell," that is, Hades, the place of departed spirits. St.

Paul simply uses the common language of ancient times. Some scholars doubt whether this was his intention, but it is not necessary for us to discuss the point, because the fact that our Lord in His human spirit did descend into the place of departed spirits, and there fulfilled a ministry, is assured to us by other passages of Scripture. For our present purpose it is enough to note that here is expressed the extent and limit of the Lord's descent. Man who had not been forbidden to eat of the tree of life, had preferred knowledge to life and so became the captive of him that had the power of death, that is the devil. Therefore Jesus, having become partaker of our flesh and blood, consented also to die, and to enter the prison house, in faith that God would not leave His soul in Hell, but would burst the bonds of death and bring forth His holy One triumphant. He trusted in God, and God did deliver Him. On the third day after He had yielded up the ghost His re-ascent began.—But was there ever triumphal procession like to this? The Victor in the most awful conflict that has ever been fought, comes back to earth, but He comes alone. No mortal eye beholds Him, no human creature knows that anything has happened. The Lord's human spirit is re-united to His body in the tomb. His spirit, soul and body are all brought into a new condition, capable of sustaining an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, yet Jerusalem slumbers quietly, and no man dreams that a new creation has actually begun. At last the earth quakes, and a mighty angel descends to roll back the stone from the door of the tomb, but it is not to let the Lord pass out. His body can now pass through the rock as easily as through the grave clothes in which it had been swathed. The second Adam comes forth, and still there is silence. Angels appear to roll back the stone from the door of the tomb, and to re-assure the

trembling women who came on their errand of love, but they sing no song as they did at Bethlehem. The time is not yet. For forty days the completion of the Lord's triumph is deferred. He shews Himself alive by many infallible proofs, first to a woman, then to the disciple who had denied Him thrice, then to all the apostles who had forsaken Him and fled. He opens their understandings, He teaches them the principles of the kingdom of God ; He bids them not to be in a hurry, but to wait for power from on high. Then He lifts up His hands, and even as He blesses them He is parted from them, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. But Oh! if their feeble senses could have pierced that cloud, what wonders might they have seen and heard. Long before the Holy Ghost had prophesied, God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Now the hour of fulfilment was come. Now indeed the morning stars may again sing together, and the sons of God shout for joy, for they behold Jesus the Crucified One pass through the heavens till He comes to His Father's house and is seated on His Father's throne. He that descended to deliver man has now ascended again, and brings with Him the spoils of victory.

The fact that in the Person of the Son of God man's nature is thus glorified and raised to the throne of God is at once the proof and the vindication of God's eternal purpose in creating man. If it be true, as our great poet Milton has supposed, that the announcement of God's design in man was the occasion of the fall of those angels that kept not their first estate, now in the ascended Jesus, God's answer to them that were lifted up with pride is seen. Had those angels trusted their Creator they might have found that the Man to whom they were to be subject



was none other than the Eternal Word, by whom all things were made, and by Whom they are sustained in being. But pride ever goeth before a fall. On the other hand, all faithful creatures will for ever give thanks that the Word was made flesh, because they will for ever enjoy the inexhaustible treasures of God's love and power, which could not otherwise have been made manifest.

Let us now proceed to consider, as briefly as possible, the work of the ascended Lord in heaven. In what character and to what end has Jesus the Risen Saviour ascended into heaven? The answer may be given in familiar words. "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of bulls and goats, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." It is as a Priest on our behalf that Christ has gone into heaven. Though his priesthood is of a higher order than that of Aaron, yet the ritual of the law, especially the ritual of the great day of Atonement, was a type and shadow of the higher thing. That ritual began in the morning with the offering of the daily burnt-offering by the High Priest. The anti-type is seen in the self-surrender of Him who said, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God, and in His life of perfect righteousness in our mortal flesh. Then followed in the type the slaying of the victims for the sin-offering, whose bodies were burned without the camp, but whose blood was carried by the High Priest into the holiest of all and sprinkled on the mercy seat while the cloud of incense arose. Here we see the work of Him on whom was laid the iniquity of us all, who endured the cross, despising the shame, who was made a curse for us,

but who, being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, has entered in our now glorified flesh into heaven itself, to appear before God as the Lamb that was slain. In every annual sacrifice for sin there were two parts, first the death of the victim by shedding of blood, secondly the presenting of the memorial of the sacrifice by sprinkling the blood in the most holy place. In the great and perfect fulfilment of the type the death of the Victim was seen on Calvary, the presenting of the memorial began when Christ our High Priest ascended into heaven, to appear in the presence of God on our behalf; where He still abides, ever pleading before God the infinite merits of His one all-sufficient sacrifice, ever receiving from God for us the abounding riches of His grace.—And there He will abide until the approach of the hour when the burnt offering of the evening must be presented, when He that is able to keep us from falling shall present His Church faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

But Christ has not ascended into heaven solely in the character of priest. We are bidden to consider Him as the Apostle as well as the High Priest of our profession. Priesthood implies a ministry towards God on behalf of men. Apostleship implies a ministry to men from God. On the Day of Pentecost Peter testified to the astonished multitude, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." At His Ascension the Incarnate Lord received from the Father that full and infinite endowment of the Holy Ghost which belonged to Him from all eternity, but which could not be contained in

mortal flesh. Now He is constituted Head over all things that He may fill all with grace and glory; and especially He is constituted Head of His Body the Church, which is that part of the redeemed creation which is brought into closest union with the glorified Redeemer, and in which is to be seen the first and chiefest manifestation of His glory. Therefore in the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost Christ imparted to His Church all necessary spiritual power, according to the measure of the stature of every member of the Body, and according to the necessary limitation of our present mortal condition. All power for preaching the gospel, all grace of sacraments, all manifestation of heavenly gifts, prophecy, tongues, miracles, all were given in that one outpouring from the Ascended Lord, to abide till that which is perfect shall come. Thus the Church should have fulfilled her apostolic mission to the world, according to the word spoken by the Lord, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, He shall testify of Me, and ye also shall bear witness." So also the Church, being already raised in the Spirit into the heavenly places with Christ, should have continued to do on earth that which her Head has continued to do in heaven. She should have taken part in His priestly work, making supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks for all men; presenting before God the memorial of His One Sacrifice in His broken Body and shed Blood, sacramentally present through the Holy Ghost; but not *repeating* that sacrifice any more than the Lord Himself repeats it in heaven; above all remembering that while we shew His death, we do it till He come.

*Till He come.* Would that the words could be sounded broadcast in the ears and hearts of all Christian people. Without the hope which they imply

the gospel is imperfectly preached, and only partially believed. A three fold cord is not quickly broken. And the three strands in the one cord of the Gospel by which God would draw men to Himself are faith in Christ crucified, faith in Christ risen and ascended, faith in Christ coming again. Each one of the three is equally indispensable. We might almost invert St. Paul's language in our text, and say He that has ascended up far above all heavens must also descend again. His blessed feet shall again stand upon this earth. This part of the one gospel was indeed the first part to be proclaimed. As the disciples stood gazing up into heaven when the Lord was taken from them, the angels stood by them and said, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." In like manner. In His risen body, still bearing the marks of the nails and the spears, yet how wondrously changed and glorified. But how far may we press the words "in like manner." We have already quoted the Psalm about His Ascension. God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. So St. Paul writes, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." These statements seem to correspond. But will He appear in like manner to a little company of eleven disciples? I do not dare to affirm that it will be so, but neither do I dare to affirm that it is impossible. We read concerning the coming forth of the High Priest from the heavenly sanctuary that He shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that are waiting for Him, unto salvation (Heb. IX, 28). To them that are waiting, whose hearts are in the attitude of the disciples who stood gazing up into heaven. There may be those who like Mary Magdalene, shall see Him before others. God only knows. But then

there is our gathering together unto the Lord, and this takes place not on the earth but in the air ; which simply means the interspace between the heavenly place from which the Lord descends, and the earth to which He returns ; and this gathering together to Him seems to include all faithful members of the One Body. St. Paul's words indicate a certain order in this gathering together to the Lord in the air. He says the dead in Christ shall rise first. That is the necessary preliminary to our all being caught up to meet the Lord ; for we which are alive and remain (among whom St. Paul then hoped himself to be) shall not prevent, that is, shall not get ahead of, them which are asleep. The dead in Christ rise first. *Then*—this word *then* has been strangely misunderstood. Its real significance is “in the next place,” or “thereupon,” but it has often been misinterpreted as if it implied “in one and the same moment.” The mistake has probably arisen from an unconscious remembrance of St. Paul's words in the first epistle to the Corinthians, about the change of the mortal bodies of those who are alive. He says that this change will take place “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” He does *not* say that the whole process of our gathering to the Lord in the air will take place in one and the same moment, yet a great many faithful people imagine that he has said so. Let it be understood that my object is not to define anything, but to guard you against the snare of attempting any definitions. The dead in Christ shall rise *first* ; after this those who are alive and remain shall be changed and caught up to meet the Lord together with those who have been raised. But at what interval this may be done, and in what order, again we say, God only knows. In the Book of the Revelation the apostle John records a vision given to him of the hundred forty and four thousand who are

gathered to the Lamb on the Mount Zion (whatever those words may mean), as a sheaf of firstfruits of that great harvest or ingathering which the Lord declared to be the consummation of this age.—In another chapter the apostle records another vision of the two great witnesses who are slain because of their testimony, into whose dead bodies after three days and a half the spirit of life from God enters, and they ascend up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies behold them. How are the wonders described in these visions related to that gathering to the Lord in the air, of which St. Paul speaks to the Thessalonians? We can only say that it appears almost certain that what St. John saw in spiritual vision must be *included* in that which St. Paul solemnly delivers “by the word of the Lord.” For all that we can tell, there may be other steps or stages in the one gathering to the Lord ; such as are indicated, for example, in the parable of the ten virgins, or in that still more solemn heart-shaking word of the Lord, “the one shall be taken, and the other left.” But, by whatever steps, at last the gathering to the Lord of all the faithful shall surely be completed, and the marriage of the Lamb shall be solemnized. Then, not till then, will heaven be opened, and the Lord be revealed, riding upon the white horse, followed by the armies of His glorified saints. Then He will destroy His enemies, and at last give peace to the weary earth.

Let me conclude with a word of warning. The word of prophecy, both the word recorded in the Scriptures and the word spoken in our assemblies, is as a light shining in a dark place. Such a light is sufficient to indicate the direction in which our course lies. It is not sufficient to enable us to map out the course ahead, or to draw up a sort of time-



table of the steps in our gathering together to the Lord. All such attempts are mischievous and profane.—The true use of the light of prophecy is to quicken in our hearts the consciousness of the Lord's nearness, to make us feel how thin is the veil which now hides Him from us. At any moment He may lift it, and we shall see His face.—Wherefore, beloved, be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.



## HOMILY.

*4th Sunday in Advent. 21st December, 1924.*

EPISTLE—PHIL. iv. 4-7. GOSPEL—JOHN i. 19-28.

FROM Pentecost to Advent our Sundays are numbered with reference to the former feast.

We lately observed the twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost. This is not a mere matter of convenience for the framing of an almanac. It contains also a spiritual lesson. After the sending down of the Holy Ghost from the risen and ascended Lord there is no fresh chapter to be opened in the revelation of God's one eternal purpose, until the Lord Jesus shall again come forth from heaven. The whole work of God in the interval between the two events is one and the same. It is the gathering out from among all mankind of a people for God's name. It is the constitution, development and perfecting of the Church, the Body of Christ. It is the espousing, training, adorning and presentation of the Bride of the Lamb. The empires of this world run their own course ; they rise, decay and fall. They are allowed of God, even ordained by Him in a certain sense, but they stand outside that purpose

of God for which the Holy Ghost was sent down from Heaven. When Jesus comes again, then the counsel of God will move forward into another development.

These truths are set before us in a striking way in the special Versicles for this octave before Christmas. We are reminded that He whose birth we are about to celebrate is the Wisdom of God, The Word proceeding from the most High, firmly and gently disposing all things. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. His name Adonai marks another step in the revelation of God's purpose, when the Word not yet made flesh revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush, itself a type of the Incarnation, and announced Himself to Joshua as Captain of the house of Israel. As the Root of Jesse and the Key of David the prophets testify that He will fulfil all the promises made to Abraham, and make Jerusalem the centre of an earthly kingdom ; while the names Dayspring from on high, Son of Righteousness, betoken that His reign will be extended till there be none left who are sitting in darkness, and death itself be swallowed up in victory.

But all stands still till Christ shall come again. Before He came He sent a messenger to prepare the way. John wrought no miracle. He

was only a voice crying in the wilderness. So the chief work of the apostles whom God has sent to His church in these days has been, not to establish a religious community, but to testify the Lord is at hand. The voice of that testimony has become very faint. Let us still try to deliver it, however feebly ; if not yet by the sound of a trumpet, at least by living like unto men that wait for their Lord. We read that the day after John gave his answer to the Pharisees, he saw Jesus coming to him, and was able to say “ Behold the Lamb of God.” May we have like experience.

## HOMILY.

*Sunday after Christmas. 28th December, 1924.*

EPISTLE—HEB. i. 1-12. GOSPEL—JOHN i. 1-14.

WE know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true. So writes St. John at the close of his first epistle. The Lord Jesus said, "This is life eternal that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." There is no other way of knowing God save in Jesus Christ His Son. Something *about* God we may know from His works. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. But the knowledge of God's works is not the same thing as the knowledge of God Himself. So also to the prophets of old God gave some revelation *about* Himself and His purposes. But God Himself they knew not as we now know Him. In these last days God has revealed Himself in His Son. We know that the Son of God has come. With awe-struck hearts we are at this season contemplating the manner of His coming.

There is only one God, the eternal Father who remains invisible, the eternal Son who is the

express image, the revealer of the Father, the Eternal Spirit, who carries into effect the will of the Father revealed by the Son. Yet they are not three Gods but one God. When we stand in the stable at Bethlehem, and gaze upon the Babe lying in the manger, we behold the One God in the Person of the Eternal Son, now made flesh and dwelling among us. There is no change in respect of His Godhead, He has neither laid aside His Godhead nor modified His divine mode of existence, but He has taken our human nature, being conceived by the Holy Ghost, He has become one with us men for our salvation and for the blessing of all creatures ; and in that same nature, now glorified and exalted, He abides for ever, fulfilling all the deep counsels of eternal love.

For God is Love. And true love ever seeks expression. God has not made the world and all things therein because He needed anything, but to find an outlet for His love. Of this love Christ is at once the sole channel and the measure. The object of the gospel is that we may be able to comprehend the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. In Bethlehem we see only the beginning. The eternal Son has humbled Himself and made Himself of no reputation. Lo, I come to do Thy will O God. He will stand

to His word for weal or woe. In His life on earth we see Him enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself. In Gethsemane we see Him fainting under the burden of our sins. On the cross we see Him made a curse for us, stricken of God. But on the third day we behold Him raised from the dead in the same human nature, delivered from mortality, and then ascending into heaven and set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. There He is waiting till the day shall come when He can open yet another chapter in the unfolding of God's love. We know that the Son of God hath come. We also know that He shall come again. Let us by responding to His love hasten the day of His appearing.







## HOMILY.

*2d Sunday after Easter, Apr 26, 1925.*

EPISTLE, 1 Peter, II, 19.

GOSPEL, John X, 11-16.

“**Y**E were as sheep going astray.” The words apply to all mankind. Adam was expelled from the garden because of transgression, and all his seed have been groping in the darkness of this world, feeling after God, but with little power to find Him. But God has never forsaken nor forgotten His erring creature. Even before the sheep went astray the remedy was provided, the Shepherd who should seek and save that which was lost was fore-ordained. Types and foreshadowings of the Good Shepherd were given in the dispensations before Christ came. Perhaps David was the chief of them in spite of his grievous sins. But there was one part of the Good Shepherd’s work in which none of His predecessors could be even a faint shadow of Him. “I lay down My life for the sheep.” The words must not be understood merely as expressing the devotion of a whole life to a particular object. They do express that, but they express more. Christ truly went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. But this is only half

the matter. All His life on earth He endured grief, suffering wrongfully, but even this was not that laying down His life for the sheep, of which He speaks in to-day's gospel. There is more still. His own self He bare our sins in His Own body on the tree. We needed to be redeemed from the curse of the broken law, and that we might be so redeemed the Incarnate Son of God, who alone in our very nature kept the law and perfected holiness, *He* consented to be made a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

This propitiation avails for all men. Eternally planned in the counsels of God, the effects thereof were felt even before the One Sacrifice for sin was consummated. All light and grace from God before Christ came were as the prevenient beams of the sun not yet risen. Melchizidek, Abraham, Moses, the prophets, all these testified of Christ according to their day and measure, and they were all illustrations of the principle of election according to which God carries out His purpose. When at last Christ came He found that in the fold of Israel His elect people, His authority had been usurped by hirelings who cared not for the sheep, but would leave them to the wolf. He makes His preparations for the judgment which He sees approaching. He finds in the fold sheep who will hear His voice. He calleth them by name, so that when God brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep He could lead them out of that

earthly fold to a new and heavenly pasture. Then began the dispensation under which we still live. There were other sheep not of that ancient Jewish fold. God turned to the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name. Christ has made of Jew and Gentile one flock, to whom St. Peter could write, "Ye are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

Alas ! the history of that new flock has been sadly similiar to that of the former. There are divisions in the one flock. The authority of the One Shepherd has been despised, and hirelings have usurped His place. The one hope of His coming again has been forgotten, and there are ominous signs of the wolf coming to scatter the sheep. Let us cry to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls and beseech Him not to forsake His flock, but come to our help. "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that dwellest between the cherubims shine forth."



# HOMILY.

*Pentecost, May 31, 1925*

EPISTLE, Eph. iv, 4 - 16.

GOSPEL, John xiv, 15.

GOD has given to us two great gifts. We commemorated the one at Christmas. We give thanks for the other to-day. In these two gifts, the gift of His Son and the gift of His Spirit, all the riches of God's grace are contained. Eternity will not exhaust their treasures of goodness.

Till the Son of God became Man. God remained to a large extent an unknown God. His power indeed was shewn forth by His works. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork. But the prophet Isaiah truly said, "Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." When Christ was born God was revealed. The One Eternal God became visible in the Person of the eternal Son, even in our mortal flesh. In His

life and death the character of God was made known. His love was declared in that, though His creature had sinned and fallen, yet God sent His own Son to be the Saviour of the world. His awful holiness was manifested in that though Christ was without spot and blameless in our flesh, yet He died because of the sins committed in that same flesh by all mankind. His unchanging purpose was seen in that the creature which had sinned, but made satisfaction for sin in Christ, is exalted to the highest heaven, and set over the works of God's hands. In this work of salvation, as in all God's dealings, the three Persons in the One Godhead ever combine. The will of the eternal Father is the source and fountain of all. The Eternal Son receives and utters the will of the Father. The Eternal Spirit waits upon the counsel of God brought forth by the Son, and carries it into effect. These relations between the three Divine Persons in the One Godhead are eternal and unchangeable.

That which is new and wonderful is this, that He who was in the beginning with God, the only begotten of the Father, was made flesh, and abides



flesh, glorified and exalted for ever. Henceforward the will of the Father is declared and made known through One who is very Man, and the Holy Ghost waits upon the word of Man in order to work out the whole counsel of God.

Because the Son of God abides perfect God *and* perfect Man, therefore it is that He needs a *body* in order to fulfil his function as the One Mediator between God and men. In like manner the Holy Ghost, who has become the Spirit of *Christ*, honours the Incarnate Word by using the members of Christ's mystical Body to make known the manifold wisdom of God. To form this mystical Body, the instrument whereby Christ shall fulfil all God's counsel, the Holy Ghost was sent down as on this day. All these long centuries Christ has waited, the Holy Ghost has waited, the groaning creation has waited, for the perfecting of the Body of Christ. How much longer shall the waiting last through the slowness of heart in all God's people? It is a blessed thing that God enabled us in the service of yesterday to confess our sin and the sin of all our brethren. Let our continual cry be, "We beseech Thee, O Lord, come among us, and with great might succour us."



## HOMILY.

*2nd Sunday after Circumcision. 10th Jan., 1926.*

EPISTLE—ROM. xii. 1-5. GOSPEL—LUKE ii. 41.

WIST ye not that I must be about my Father's business? The mystery of the Incarnation may be expressed by saying that there is One Person subsisting in two distinct natures at the same time. Our Lord Jesus Christ is God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ. He is one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by Unity of Person. When we gazed upon the Babe in the manger at Bethlehem, we beheld Him by whom all things were made, the Word and Wisdom of God. Yet as regards human intelligence that Babe was wholly unconscious, like every other newborn child. In the gospel for this day we find a wondrous change. The intelligence of the Child has so developed that He is able to listen to the doctors who expound the Scriptures and to understand their teaching. But, more wonderful still, His human spirit has so expanded that in it He has become conscious of His own personality, and aware of His own mission. "My

Father's business." The words are not the utterance of His divine omniscience. They are the result of the inworking of the Holy Ghost in His human nature. As He listens to the reading of Moses and the prophets and the psalms He recognizes therein the things concerning Himself. He discerns His mission and accepts it. Nevertheless He returns to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph, and remains subject to them until the time appointed of the Father. It is the perfect example of patience and obedience. So He presents His body a living sacrifice to God.

Well had it been for the Church on earth if she had followed the example of her Lord. The calling of the Church is indeed to reign with Christ, but the time is not yet come. Until the Lord Himself shall come again and take her to Himself, the calling of the Church is to be as strangers and pilgrims, subject to the powers that be; holding aloft the lamp of truth that men may be enlightened; ministering God's grace that men may serve Him and be prepared for the life to come. That, and nothing else, is the business which the Father has given to the Church now—to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. Perchance we have been in some danger lest we should so cling to that form of the Lord's work

which we have known and rejoiced in, as to hinder Him. His present dealings with us are intended to make us look up. He is about to enter on a fresh stage of His Father's business. Let us wait for Him in truth, that we may have part therein.



## HOMILY.

*Sunday after Ascension. 16th May, 1926.*

EPISTLE—1 PETER iv. 7-11 ; GOSPEL—JOHN xv. 26 to xvi. 4.

SORROW had filled the heart of the disciples because the Lord had said, "I go my way to Him that sent me." They did not ask whither goest Thou? They made no enquiry about the Father to Whom He was going, or the object for which He was going. They only catch the point, that He was about to leave them, and their hearts sink. So little do we often understand our greatest mercies. In the seventh Psalm it is written, "For their sakes therefore return thou on high." St. Paul expounds the import of these words by quoting another Psalm, "When He ascended up on high He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men." But the Ascension is first and above all the culminating point of the personal triumph of the Lord Jesus Himself. There we see the stone which the builders rejected become the head of the corner. We see Jesus who was made lower



than the angels for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour. Herein we see the fulfilment of the destiny for which man was originally created. What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him? The answer follows, Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands. To this end the Son of God took man's flesh. It was necessary that in that flesh He should suffer and die, because man's flesh had been made the instrument of sin. It was necessary that the risen Lord should by His own blood enter into the holy place, that as High Priest He might make propitiation, and claim the reward of His own matchless service. We see Him highly exalted, crowned with glory. But His personal exaltation is not the whole of His reward. While still on earth He prayed to the Father, saying, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am." He likens Himself to a corn of wheat, which abides alone unless it die. He died that He might bring forth much fruit, and not abide alone. But His prayer has not yet received the full answer. They whom the Father has given Him are not yet with Him where He is. The heart of the Lord is not yet satisfied. Our hearts also should not yet be satisfied. We have indeed received wonderful blessings through the presence and work of the Lord in the heavenly region. He

has shed down upon us the Holy Ghost. He has quickened us by the Spirit with new and immortal life. He has enabled us to eat of His flesh and drink His blood. He gives us to exercise according to our small measure the powers of the world to come. But there is another thing which He is doing for us in heaven, which, perhaps, we do not value aright. He said to the disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you." When *we* expect a cherished friend, we take pains to make ready a place for him. So does the Lord Jesus for us. O let us forget those things which are behind and reach forth unto those things which are before. Let us press toward the mark, that the Lord may come forth and receive us to Himself.

## HOMILY.

*Pentecost. 23rd May, 1926.*

EPISTLE—EPH. iv. 4-16 ; GOSPEL—JOHN xiv. 15.

WE worship One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. The relations of the three Divine Persons in the one Divine nature are absolutely unchangeable. The Father is of none. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father. The Holy Ghost proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son, the Spirit of them both. Herein no change is possible. But another change was possible, and has become fact. God has been manifested in flesh. The Son of God, the Word which was in the beginning with God, dwelling in the bosom of the Father, was made flesh. And in man's flesh He ascended into heaven and was glorified. The glory of the Incarnate Word is the gift of the Holy Ghost. Jesus had said, "He that believeth on Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." It is added, "the Holy Ghost was not yet given because that

Jesus was not yet glorified." He was indeed conceived by the Holy Ghost. At His baptism, by John, the Holy Ghost descended on Him in bodily shape like a dove. But still there was a gift of the Holy Ghost, which even the Word made flesh could not receive till He ascended to His Father. So on the Day of Pentecost St. Peter explained what had happened. This Jesus God hath raised up. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this. From the Man at God's right hand the Spirit is poured forth, and that outpouring shall never cease till, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, God shall gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him.

The next step in this process of heading up all things in Christ is the formation and perfecting of the Church. The Day of Pentecost is rightly called the birthday of the Church. St. Peter in his address to the multitude quoted the prophet Joel, and declared that what they saw and heard was the beginning of the fulfilment of his prophecy. "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." But it was only the beginning. By the example of the Gentile Cornelius, God soon showed that the outpouring of the Spirit was not for the Jew alone,

but that in every nation believers might be made partakers of the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, it is a grievous error into which Christian men have fallen, when they suppose that in this dispensation, before the coming of the Lord, all the world shall be converted to Christ, and be made partakers of His Spirit. God has indeed turned to the Gentiles ; but it is in order that from among both Jew and Gentile He might take a people for His name, whom He should constitute to be the Body of Christ, the heavenly instrument whereby God's grace should be ministered, first to all mankind, thereafter to all the creatures of God's hand. How greatly has the purpose of God been hindered through this blindness which has come upon the spiritual Israel. In the holy service of yesterday, we confessed before God this our sin, the sin of many generations. Perhaps, in all the liturgical observances which we owe to the restored apostleship, there is nothing more striking than that service. Let us continue in this attitude of humble confession and supplication, beseeching the Lord to come among us and with great might succour us.







H O M I L Y .

2nd Sunday in Advent, 1926.

## HOMILY.

*2nd Sunday in Advent. 5th December, 1926.*

EPISTLE—ROM. xv. 4-13.

GOSPEL—LUKE xxi. 25-33.

THE Church in Rome consisted partly of Jews who had taken up their abode in that metropolitan city, and partly of Gentile believers. Therefore, in the epistle for the day, the apostle exhorts both parties, "Receive ye one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God." He demonstrates that, in respect of the Jew, Christ was a minister of the circumcision, because by Him were fulfilled the promises of God made to Abraham. He also shews that in Christ the mercy of God overflows to the Gentiles ; for Christ makes in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace. The true work of this dispensation is not the conversion of the whole world to Christianity, but the gathering together an election from all nations whose calling it is to be witnesses for God's truth, to offer to God acceptable worship, and to wait for His Son from heaven. The season of Advent comes to us as a solemn reminder that unless we are really waiting for the Lord our grasp of the truth will be slack and our worship defective. For in this holy service of the Eucharist, out of which all other worship springs, we show the Lord's death

*till He come.* We do not approach the altar to commemorate One who is dead, as soldiers salute the memorial of a fallen comrade. We do indeed call to remembrance the fact that Christ died, but our service is a memorial of One who is alive, though as yet He is not visibly present with us. And just as we may take up some memorial of an absent friend, and may comfort our hearts with the thought "I shall see him or her tomorrow or next week," so as we eat the Lord's flesh and drink His blood in this blessed Sacrament our hearts whisper, *till He come, till He come.*

It is written, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." But this was written before the Son of God was made Man. The verse goes on, "when the desire cometh it is a tree of life." The Babe, whose birth in Bethlehem we are about to celebrate, was that tree of life. The fruit of the tree was first seen when life and immortality were brought to light by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. But there is other fruit yet to come. *They that are Christ's, at His coming.* That is the next step, our gathering together unto Him. In the epistle the apostle prays that the God of hope may so fill us with joy and peace in believing that we may abound in hope. So may it be. Let us look up and lift up our hearts, as the Lord commanded. So shall we not be ashamed before Him at His coming.



H O M I L Y .

4th Sunday in Quadragesima, 1927.

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## HOMILY.

*4th Sunday in Quadragesima, 27th March, 1927.*

EPISTLE—GAL. IV. 21.      GOSPEL—JOHN VI. 1-14.

THESE are the two covenants. The apostle teaches us that Abraham's two wives, Sara and Agar, were types of two covenants, the one which God granted to Ishmael, Abraham's seed according to the flesh, the other confirmed to Isaac by an oath, whereby he became the type of Christ the promised seed of the woman, in whom God's Kingdom shall be established for ever. We, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. We are partakers of a heavenly calling. The Church of Christ is not an institution of this world. Both in its origin and as regards its destiny it is heavenly. It is, in fact, a new creation. The Lord Jesus is Himself the beginning of the creation of God, and He is so called in the epistle to Laodicea. This did not happen when He was made flesh and born in Bethlehem. *Then* He made Himself of no reputation, and became obedient unto death. But while He was yet in the grave He was quickened with the power of a new and endless life. In the power of that life He rose from the dead, He was seen of His disciples forty days, and then by the indwelling

energy of the Holy Ghost He was lifted up into heaven, where He abides *waiting*. For what is He waiting? He waits for the next step in the new creation, for the gathering together unto Him from among all nations of the Church, which is His Body and His Bride. Without the Church Christ's Kingdom cannot come. How strange and how melancholy have been the delusions of Christian men about the calling of the Church. The Church is not a mere common name for those who shall be saved. All men have been redeemed by Christ's blood. All men may be saved if they will not reject God's love. And the calling of the Church is not merely to inherit the kingdom of the earth. That is the special calling of the Jew. Our citizenship is in heaven, in that Jerusalem which is above and is free, the mother of us all—from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the prize of our calling, that He shall come forth and change the body of our humiliation. Then we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.





## HOMILY.

*Sunday after All Saints. 6th November, 1927.*

EPISTLE—1 THESS. IV. 13-V. 10: GOSPEL—MATT. XXV. 31.

WE are still keeping the feast of All Saints. The Lord Jesus is Himself the King of Saints. Holiness is of course an attribute of His divine nature, but the title King of Saints belongs to Him as Man. As we say in every Eucharist Service, "There is One Holy even One Lord Jesus Christ;" and we joyfully add, "in whom are we."

In order to fulfil the eternal purpose of God, the eternal Son came forth from the bosom of the Father, and took our flesh. He did not take a new human nature, but that same flesh which was created in Adam, innocent but as yet untried. In Adam that flesh became defiled by sin, and subject to death, and in that condition it was transmitted to all his descendants. That same flesh was taken by the Son of God.—In taking it He cleansed it from all defilement, for though He was born of a woman He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. Yet He was exposed to temptation, He was crucified through weakness, He descended into Hell. Then His reward began. God did not suffer His Holy One to see corruption. On the third day Jesus rose again, not now in weakness

but in power. The flesh in which He rises is the same flesh in which He was crucified, but marvellously changed. Man's flesh is now seen in immortality and glory. Man's flesh is now made capable of wielding divine power, for in man's flesh Jesus ascends into heaven and the Holy Ghost consents to become the Spirit of the Risen Man.

But the wonder of God's grace does not stop even here. The reward of the Risen Saviour is not only that in Him the Spirit of God condescends to make man's flesh the starting point for all His blessed operations in the whole creation for evermore. The wonder goes beyond this. Not only in Christ personal, but also, ever since the Day of Pentecost, in Christ mystical the Holy Ghost finds the perfect spiritual organisation through which rivers of living water shall for ever flow for the refreshment of God's heritage. This is the Body of Christ.

Of this Body we have all been made members in holy baptism. In each one of us the Holy Ghost consents to dwell, that in each one of us He may even now put forth the energy of Christ's risen life, and so begin to train us in all the functions of Christ's resurrection life, and prepare us for the blessed activities of the life of the world to come. This is the true Communion of All Saints.

The object of the Lord in reviving the ministry of apostleship in our days has been to recall the One Church to the consciousness of her standing and destiny. As yet the result has been only partial and incomplete. We wait for another step. We pray continually that we and all God's saints in all generations who have been elected to this glory may stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion a holy first-fruits. Then the whole Church shall be roused. Let us wait in patient confidence and joyful hope.



## HOMILY.

*16th Sunday after Pentecost. 16th Sept., 1928.*

EPISTLE—GAL. VI. 11. GOSPEL—MATT. VI. 24.

**I**N Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. In the gospel for the day the Lord bids us consider the lilies of the field and the fowls of the air. Both are examples of the wisdom of God in creation. The lilies toil not, the birds do not gather into barns. God cares for both. Yet both fade away. With man the case is different. Man was not made to die. Death in man is the fruit of transgression. Therefore, like other ordinances of the law, the rite of circumcision was enjoined in order to make it clear that without shedding of blood is no remission. And when our blessed Lord came forth from the bosom of the Father for the work of our salvation, He took that same nature which in Adam and all his descendants had been made the instrument of sin. Jesus took our very flesh, but in taking it He cleansed it from all defilement, for He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. In Him, the babe lying in the manger, was seen a new creature, the beginning of a new creation. First indeed He must in our flesh fulfil all righteousness, then in our flesh He must die and thereby make atonement for all

sin. Then in our flesh He must be lifted up into a new and glorious condition, He must ascend back into heaven, He must receive of the Father the fulness of the Holy Ghost, and from the Father's right hand He must shed forth the Spirit upon His waiting disciples and so begin the work of making all things new.

The next step in this mighty work, the first link in the living chain that is to bind all things in heaven and earth to God, is the formation of the Church, the Body of Christ. For this end the Holy Ghost was sent down on the day of Pentecost by the risen and ascended Saviour. It is a grievous error to suppose that the Church is designed to include all men who shall ultimately be saved. On the contrary the Church is the company of those whom God of His own will has begotten with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. After the Day of Pentecost the gospel was first preached to the Jews. When they as a nation rejected it, God turned to the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. The work has gone on slowly, for we Gentiles have been slow of heart to believe. Now the hour is at hand when God will wait no longer. Therefore it is that in this our day God has again raised up apostles and sent them to His Church, in order to recall Christian



men to the first love and to make preparation for the marriage of the Lamb. It has been our lot to profit by their ministry, but now they also sleep in Jesus, and the end has not yet been seen. Let us hold fast the words which the Lord has put into our lips "Bring back Thine apostles and those our brethren who have rejoiced with us in Thy returning grace." "Restore to them their bodies raised in glory and immortality." The dead in Christ must rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord. So shall we ever be with Him.

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